FRENCH RECORDS

RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE MARATHAS

VOLUMES III & IV

CORRESPONDENCE OF M. LAW DE LAURISTON
GOVERNOR OF PONDICHERRY, 1765–1776
AND OTHERS

Translated & Edited

By

Dr. V. G. Hatalkar

STATE BOARD FOR LITERATURE AND CULTURE
MANTRALAYA, BOMBAY 400 032

महाराष्ट्र राज्य साहित्य संस्कृति मंडळ

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Correspondence of M. Law de Lauriston, Governor of Pondicherry, 1765–1776, of M. Jean Baptiste Chevalier, Director of Bengal, 1767–1778, of M. de Montigny, French Agent at the Mughal Court and Later on at the Maratha Court, 1777–1779 and Others

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Late Prof. G. D. Parikh
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FOREWORD

The State Board for Literature and Culture has already brought out the 1st and 2nd Volumes of "The French Records" on the 6th March, 1978. The Board has now great pleasure in releasing Volumes III and IV of French Records entitled "Correspondence of M. Law De Lauriston, Governor of Pondicherry, 1765–1776, of M. Jean Baptiste Chevalier, Director of Bengal, 1767–1778, of M. De Montigny, French Agent at the Mughal Court and later on, at the Maratha Court, 1777–1779 and others" translated by Dr. V. G. Hatalkar in this series.

S. S. BARLINGAY

Chairman
State Board for Literature and Culture

Bombay,
20th March 1982

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INTRODUCTION

Jean Law de Lauriston, nephew of Jean Law, the celebrated French financier of the Regency in France (1715–1723), and elder brother of Jaques Law, the unfortunate commander who capitulated at Tiruchirapali (Trichinopoly) in June 1752, was born in 1724. He arrived in India in 1745, equipped with special recommendations from the East India Company in Paris. Law had a rapid and well-deserved career in India. Starting as supernumerary clerk at Pondicherry, he became deputy chief of the French establishment at Kasimbazar towards the end of 1747. In July of the next year, he was appointed a member of the Council at Chandernagore. He became chief of the comptoir at Patna in September 1749. He continued his career in this position till 1757, when the English seized Chandernagore and other French establishments in Bengal. Thereupon, Law, with 100 Europeans, 60 sipahees, 30 wagons and 4 elephants, joined Ali Gohar, eldest son of Emperor Alamgir II, on whom his father had bestowed the governorship of Bengal. Law had thus the honour of founding the first French Party in India. Ali Gohar, who later became Emperor Shah Alam II, was defeated thrice in succession by the English before Patna. On the last occasion (January 15, 1761), Law, who commanded Ali Gohar's artillery, was taken prisoner. Seir Moutakherin graphically describes Law's surrender. He was left abandoned leaning alone against a cannon and waiting for death. When the news reached Major Carnac, he arrived on the scene with some officers and soldiers and addressed Law in the following words: "You have done all that could be expected from a brave soldier; history will carry your name to posterity; now remove your sword from your belt, banish all idea of hostility against the English from your mind and accompany us". Law's reply was: "I have no objection to do so if I am allowed to surrender such as I am, but to surrender by giving up my sword is a disgrace to which I shall never submit; if you cannot

accept this condition, my life is at your disposal ". The English commander admired Law's resolve and allowed him to keep his sword. Law's courageous behaviour on this occasion won for him due recognition on his return to France at the end of the war. He was promoted to the rank of a Colonel and created a Chevalier of St. Louis. When peace was signed in England in 1763, the French King sent him to India as his representative to recover possession of the French establishments in that country. Law was soon appointed Governor-General of all the French establishments in India.

It was a most unenviable office. Pondicherry, the French capital in India, presented a miserable picture when Law arrived there on April 11, 1765. It appeared as if the town had been shaken by a terrible earthquake! The English had blown up the fortifications and razed all the houses to the ground. Grass had grown chest high everywhere. For the first few days, Law had to live under canvas. A hangar covered with thatch housed the Government offices. By dint of hard work, perseverance and will-power, the French were successful in gradually rebuilding the town.

But the external situation was even much more difficult, delicate and painful. Pondicherry, which, in the times of Dumas, was reputed for the protection it afforded to the Indian princes in the south, and under Dupleix, had become the political centre of the whole of Southern India, was now turned into a small dependency of Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of the Carnatic, who was an ally of the English and an inveterate enemy of the French. He could, at will, cut off all the communications and reduce Pondicherry to a state of starvation. Without his permission, the French could not even cross its borders. In short, Pondicherry was politically crippled. On the other hand, the English, the great rivals of the French in India, had virtually become masters of the Carnatic as far south as the Cape Comorin, for, Muhammad Ali was merely

a tool in their hands. They had not only consolidated their position in Bengal, but had extended their dominion to the east of Benares. After the battle of Baxar (October 23, 1764), the Emperor had placed himself under their protection, and in August 1765, they had acquired the Diwani of Bengal. The English had thus become a power to be dreaded in India.

The situation was thus very trying for Law. He had to use utmost tact and caution in trying not to give the slightest cause for complaint to the English. To make matters worse, a war broke out between Haider Ali and the English (1767). As was usual in such circumstances, Haider dispatched letters to Pondicherry asking for help in men, arms and ammunition. Law's refusal, though polite, certainly displeased the prince. As if to add fuel to the fire, some young men at Pondicherry saw in the present troubles an opportunity to rise from their state of misery. Whosoever was an enemy of the English, was necessarily, they thought, a friend of the French and had a right to expect help from them. They did not even hesitate to speak publicly in this tone. Worse still, Pondicherry being open on all sides, several of these young men marched out and proceeded to join Haider Ali. It was feared that their desertion, added to the reports of their indiscreet utterances which had certainly reached the ears of the English, would result in irreparable damage to French interests on the part of their European rivals. The climax was reached when these young Frenchmen, without order or discipline, whose aim in joining Haider Ali was certainly much less to expose themselves to the bullets of the English than to amass money, could not remain long in the service of this prince and as if they had become insane, they went over to the English camp.

Next, in 1774, the thoughtlessness of Duprat, interim French commandant at Mahé, in helping the Zamorin of Calicat against Haider Ali, brought the French on the

verge of an armed conflict with the ruler of Mysore. It was only averted by the prompt action of Law in recalling Duprat and replacing him by Col. Repentigny.

These few instances give a sufficient idea of the embarrassing situation Law had to face throughout his administration.

At the end of the year 1776, Law laid down the reins of his office. He was a sober, tactful and a competent man. If he had been well supported by his government, he would have raised the prestige of the French much higher. But from the beginning to the end of his term, the Court of Versailles seemed determined to refuse him all kinds of assistance. His greatest need was funds. The work on the fortifications of Pondicherry was started in 1769, but by the end of 1774 even half of the work had not been completed because of frequent interruptions caused by the paucity of funds; they continued to remain in an incomplete state even at the time of Law's retirement. Nevertheless, in spite of great handicaps, Law had raised Pondicherry from her ruins and restored her to a position sufficiently respectable if not as glorious as before. Law is the author of numerous memorials in which he has left the stamp of his wisdom and sound judgement.

This volume is different in character. In the case of the first volume, Briancourt, the French Consul at Surat, was surrounded by Maratha territory and was in touch with the agents of the Poona Court. He could collect information about the anti-Maratha activities of the English at Surat and was even planning to help the Marathas if ever they thought of attacking Surat. As for M. de St. Lubin's embassy, it entirely concerned the Marathas. In the case of this volume, the agents are far removed from the Maratha territory. In their correspondence, which consists mostly of long dispatches, with the authorities in France, they deal with the general situation in India and refer to the Marathas only for the part they play in the Indian

political activity, and when it affects Maratha-French relations. It would have been against the principles of historical research to isolate these portions and give extracts relating to the Marathas alone. The Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture has been aware of this position and has generously decided to publish the entire correspondence because even if it did not relate to the history of the Marathas, it definitely relates to the history of India which is certainly a broader and more important perspective.

Law's letter dated February 9, 1771, to M. le Duc de Praslin, Minister for the Navy

Since Haider Ali's success against the English in the war of 1767–1769, the authorities in France had been looking upon that prince as a potential ally because of his hatred of the English. Naturally, they were anxious to cultivate his friendship. Duc de Choiseul, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, therefore, decided to dispatch to Haider's Court M. Hüguel who had served that prince for four years after the fall of Pondicherry in 1761 and for whose qualities he had great esteem. Hüguel had instructions to raise a body of 300 to 400 men from among the soldiers of his old corps who were now scattered over the whole country, and engage them in the service of Haider Ali. In the opinion of Choiseul, this action on the part of the French would create a good impression upon the prince and induce him to protect the French establishments in India. Hüguel joined Haider Ali on February 24, 1771, with 200 Europeans. But his arrival in India to take service with the ruler of Mysore caused great embarrassment to Law. Haider was at this moment involved in a war with the Marathas. Law therefore feared that the Marathas, then the most powerful nation in India and the only one whom the English respected, would consider Hüguel's corps as a French force fighting for Haider Ali and against themselves. The Marathas, Law thought, would thus become the enemies of the French and the French Governor

would very much like to avoid such a situation. For, in his opinion, in case of a war with the English, the French could expect more help from the Marathas than from Haider Ali. He therefore recommended to Hüguel that the best service he could render to the ruler of Mysore was to persuade him to make peace with the Marathas by satisfying their demands.

Letter dated January 24, 1772, from Versailles

This is a reply of M. de Boynes, Minister for the Navy, to Law. The authorities in France had a grudge against the Marathas, because the two Maratha sardars Visajipant Biniwale and Gopalrao Patwardhan, who were at that time operating in the south, had sold their assistance to the highest bidder just before the fall of Pondicherry in January 1761. They were further prejudiced against the Marathas as a result of the reports sent by M. Picot, French commandant at Mahé, of the piracies committed by Angre against the French ships carrying on their trade on the Malabar Coast. It was therefore quite natural that the French Minister should suggest that in case of a war between the English and the French, Law should send the French troops garrisoned at Pondicherry (this place still without defences) into the service of Haider Ali. But Law was of the opinion that in case of such a war, the French could obtain more help from the Marathas than from Haider Ali. In view of Law's advice, the Minister did not insist and left the matter to the discretion of the Governor of Pondicherry. He merely pointed out that the attachment which Haider had constantly shown for the French required that he should be treated with due respect, whereas the French could not unfortunately find in the Marathas the same friendly dispositions as in the case of Haider Ali. On the other hand, he had received complaints of piracies committed by the Marathas against French vessels on the Malabar Coast. However, he advised Law not to give the Marathas any cause for complaint, for, the aim of French policy in India was to keep on good

terms with all the powers in that country and to see that they were disposed to help the French when such an occasion would arise, without getting entangled in their private quarrels.

Letter dated October 13, 1771, to Monseigneur Terray, Controller-General for Finance

In this long dispatch Law gives his ideas on the prevailing situation of affairs in India. He tries to remove the wrong impression formed in France and also at the Isle of France about Haider Ali and the Marathas. He points out how little the French ought to rely on a powerful succour from the ruler of Mysore in case of war. He is also surprised that the authorities in France as well as at the Isle of France should consider the Marathas as simple pirates who are the most redoubtable nation in India, who possess half of it and who have the right on the fourth part of the revenues of almost all the other parts. But it is strange that in spite of his long stay and experience of conditions in India, Law could not appreciate the merits of the guerilla warfare, perfected by the Marathas and ably followed by Haider Ali. In fact, that was the only correct tactics of warfare to be adopted by the Indian princes to oppose the Europeans. It was by means of the same tactics that Haider Ali triumphed over the English for the second time during the Second Anglo-Mysore War. Law also commits a mistake in thinking that the Marathas attacked Haider Ali at the instigation of the English. He fails to understand the character of the Peshwa Madhavrao who was quite capable of using his own judgement and would be the last man to be guided by any body's advice. Law is also wrong while talking about the English attack on the kingdom of Tanjaour. He says that the Raja was mistaken in expecting help from the Marathas, because the latter had a secret understanding with the English who amused them by treaties, for, in Bengal, they (the English) had just abandoned to them (the Marathas) in some manner the Emperor Shah Alam with whom a Maratha army

was marching towards Delhi. Law does not seem to have correctly assessed the situation in northern India. The English had no other alternative but to play the role of silent spectators during this episode. While speaking about the Marathas, Law says that they are unquestionably the people most spread out, the best organised and the best governed in India, and that their power was augmenting from day to day. He prophesies that the Marathas would one day succeed in destroying the empire of the Mussalmans and replace it by that of the Hindus. But Law's estimate of the Maratha character is puzzling. He says: " The Marathas are a people whose alliance is almost as dangerous as their enmity, because they spare no one to enrich themselves: friend or foe, they treat everyone alike; irrespective of the person in whose service they are, they finally ruin him; therefore the English treat the Marathas with respect less for the good than for the harm which they can do. " Law seems to be referring to Murarrao Ghorpade, the only Maratha chief with whom the French had formed an alliance in the time of Dupleix. But he forgets that Murarrao was then functioning independently of the Peshwa and was purely as a mercenary chief. Law's assessment is once again wrong when he asserts that if war had taken place between the English and the French in India, the former would have certainly had in their service a body of Maratha cavalry, perhaps twenty thousand strong. In our opinion, there was hardly any Maratha chief at this time imprudent enough to assist the English with his troops without the authorization of the Central Government. Finally, in the eventuality of a war between France and England, Law thinks that the best place to attack in India was Bombay. The French could easily seize this port, he says. Besides, since the whole territory on this side belongs to the Marathas, the French General could take advantage of the neighbourhood of Poona to initiate an alliance with the Peshwa, an alliance which could upset the whole of India and do lot of harm to the English.

Letter dated March 19, 1772, addressed to Monseigneur Terray, Controller-General for Finance

It refers to the Maratha proposals made by the Peshwa Madhavrao to Law for a Franco-Maratha alliance. In view of the rumours of an impending war between France and England, Law feels that if he were informed in time, he would perhaps have a chance of saving the best part of his garrison by sending it to the Maratha camp which was then located in Mysore. As for sending it into the service of Haider Ali, according to the instructions of the Minister, it was impossible to reach him with a detachment, because the Nawab was shut up in Shrirangapatan, surrounded by the Maratha army. Moreover, such an action, Law argues, would have forced the whole Maratha nation to declare itself against the French and thrown it on the side of the English.

Letter dated April 23, 1772, addressed to Monseigneur Terray, Controller-General for Finance

In case of a rupture between the French and the English, if the latter tried to force the Nawab of Bengal to expel the French from the province, Law suggests that the French should place themselves under the protection of the Marathas by securing letters from their chiefs to the Nawab of Bengal declaring that the French nation being a friend of that of the Marathas, they (the Marathas) would take offence at the wrongs done to the French and avenge them. He would obtain similar letters for the Coromandel Coast and for Mahè.

This extract is a very precious document. It contains the proposals made by the Peshwa Madhavrao to Law for a Franco-Maratha alliance. These proposals reveal Madhavrao's wisdom, far-sightedness and business-like character, qualities for which, perhaps, some historians have styled him as the greatest of the Peshwas. He has proposed such generous terms that he has not given a chance to the French to suggest any changes therein.

He is fully aware of the fact that the French could not be expected to attack the English unless they were at war with them. He would therefore wait patiently till that moment. He had inflicted crushing defeats upon Haider Ali, but he wanted to destroy him completely. He was fully aware that the English, now a dominant power in India, would not fail to play the divide and rule policy in this country, which was so much to their interest. To forestall the English, in case they decided to support Haider Ali, Madhavrao would have recourse to the French who, he felt sure, would not decline such tempting offers, which, at the same time, were reasonable. The presence of 10,000 French soldiers in India would certainly neutralise the activity of the English, whose settlements in India would be in danger of an attack by the French, who would not have to incur any expenses because these were going to be paid by the Marathas. The cession of the port of Bassein was intended to prevent the Government of Bombay from doing any mischief to the Maratha territory, whereas the French troops to be stationed with Nizam Ali would act as a check upon the English in Bengal. Finally, after the destruction of Haider Ali, as soon as war broke out between France and England, Madhavrao would not lose the occasion to drive out the English from India. The proposed treaty with the French thus reveals the great genius of Madhavrao, whose untimely death has been rightly regarded as a greater calamity for the Marathas than even the disaster of Panipat. Naturally, the Council of Pondicherry examined the proposals very carefully and came to the unanimous conclusion that the acceptance of these proposals was the only means of re-establishing French influence in India and of humbling the power of the English in that country. Law dispatched the decision of the Council to the authorities in France. But unfortunately, Duc de Choiseul was no longer in control of the affairs of State and the King was too much engrossed with his pleasures and shameless debaucheries. No wonder then that, in spite of his reminder in 1774,

Law received no reply from Versailles. As regards the Marathas, Madhavrao died on November 18, 1772. His death was followed by a period of great confusion in Maratha politics from which Haider was the only person to derive the greatest benefit. But in 1774 Law still felt that if the Maratha nation wished to act in unison, it would be impossible for the English to withstand it, an opinion which was substantiated by the debacle at Wadgaon and the defeat of an experienced general like Goddard.

The second extract mentions that Madhavrao's successor, the Peshwa Narayanrao had also approached the French. Ambitious of military reputation, he was planning an invasion of the Carnatic. In fact, there was a strong rumour in the south that Nizam Ali, his brother Bassalat Jang and even Haider Ali were to join in a campaign which was directed against Muhammad Ali, Nawab of Arcot, who had made the conquest of the small kingdoms of Madura and Marava and had his eyes on the kingdom of Tanjaour. Obviously, Narayanrao was aware of the proposals made by his brother Madhavrao to the French Governor. It is quite natural therefore that he should wish to associate the French with this campaign. The Maratha commandant of Gurumkonda communicated to Law the desire of his master for an alliance with the French. The French Governor sought this opportunity to send a present consisting of a pair of pistols and a costly gun to Narayanrao. The Peshwa reciprocated this friendly gesture of Law by sending him a 'sarpech' which was accompanied by a letter. Unfortunately, simultaneously with the present there arrived at Gurumkonda the dreadful news of the assassination of Narayanrao at the hands of his uncle Raghunathrao *alias* Raghoba who succeeded him. When the latter learnt about the dispatch of the 'sarpech' and the letter to the French Governor, he summoned the commandant of Gurumkonda to his presence to find out the details. The new Peshwa was also anxious for the friendship of the French. He too was planning an invasion of the Carnatic

in conjunction with Nizam Ali, his brother Bassalat Jang and Haider Ali.

Letter dated October 21, 1775, addressed to the Minister for the Navy

The letter refers to the fresh Maratha proposals for an alliance with the French after the capture of Thana by the English (December 1774). The proposals are accompanied with some presents and a letter from the Peshwa Sawai Madhavrao to the King of France.

Letter dated February 5, 1776, addressed to M. de Sartine, Minister for the Navy

The letter mentions the fact that Law had to advance Rs. 300 from his pocket to be given as a present to the Maratha envoys who had brought the letters and the presents from the Peshwa to the King of France. Law had recourse to this proceeding because the transaction demanded utmost secrecy.

Letter dated February 14, 1776, addressed to M. de Sartine

Briancourt, the French Consul at Surat, is trying to conclude a treaty with the Marathas for the safety of the French ships sailing on the Konkan Coast. In Law's opinion, such a treaty was very desirable provided it was a solid and a durable one. But he doubts whether Briancourt will succeed in concluding such a treaty. For, Law says that since the Marathas are at present at war with the English, they will certainly make offers and promises, but immediately after the conclusion of peace of which one of the conditions, according to the English custom, will probably be that the Marathas should renounce all the treaties with the French. And then, Law continues, it will be the same story over again; the French flag will no more be respected than that of the other nations and the French will be the poorer for the expenses which they might have incurred. Once again Law prophesies correctly, for, in fact, that was one of the conditions of the Treaty

of Salbai, although the Marathas did not observe that condition and Montigny continued to stay as French Resident at the Maratha Court till 1788.

These reflexions are another very important document. It is, in fact, a reply by no other person than Law himself, in whose judgement Chevalier, the French Director at Chandernagore, has full confidence, to all the latter's arguments in favour of sending 4,000 to 5,000 French soldiers to be enrolled in the service of the Mughal Emperor. According to Law, a dispatch of such a large force could hardly be made without forcing the English to declare war against the French, either directly or as auxiliaries of some Indian power. In his opinion, it was neither with the Emperor nor with any one of the Indian powers who surround him in the north of Hindustan and who have no actual interest either in Bengal or in the Deccan, but with the Marathas that the French must begin to negotiate for the dispatch of 4,000 men. This warlike nation, says Law, was spread everywhere and was in a position to strike blows in several directions simultaneously. But before every thing, he warns, the French must try to unite the leading members who are to-day, thanks to English politics, so divided and opposed to each other that it was hardly possible to succeed in a project formed with their co-operation. The two main branches—they formed to-day two different nations, says Law—are the Marathas of Poona of which the royal family is confined at Satara and those of Berar and Cuttack of which the head, who really belongs to the royal family at Satara, holds his Court at Nagpur. Law thinks that it was not impossible to find some grounds strong enough to induce these two main branches to unite for the common cause. Law recommends that the French must have a corps of 3,000 Europeans and 10,000 sipahees with the Marathas of Poona who would operate in the peninsula, and as many with the Marathas of Nagpur for the whole of Bengal and the provinces depending on it. Once the treaty with the

Marathas was concluded in the name of the Mughal Emperor, nothing would be easier than effecting a union of the French forces with them either through the peninsula or through Bengal or some other port of India. Even if the French wanted to begin by a dispatch of a body of troops to Delhi, the best and the shortest routes passed through Maratha territories. Law concludes that the Maratha nation must be for the French or against them. With its support, greatest difficulties would be surmounted. But if that nation was against the French, joined to the forces of the English who would soon succeed in uniting all the Maratha bodies, the French could do nothing. Law adds that even if the French were unable to unite all the Marathas in their favour, they would at least have a considerable number of men on their side. Needless to say that Law is not in favour of the Tatta project as suggested by Chevalier. But in his opinion, even the success at Tatta and of the subsequent events on the side of Delhi also depends on a treaty with the Marathas. Simultaneously with the enterprise or even before, the French must form an alliance with the Marathas and have with them a corps of 2,000 or 3,000 Europeans and 8,000 to 10,000 sipahees. They must have other forces to employ on the Malabar Coast as well as on the Coromandel Coast in concert with Haider Ali and on the Orissa Coast to act in conjunction with Nizam Ali or with the Marathas of Nagpur. And that cannot be done, Law asserts, unless war is declared between the French and the English.

Letter dated July 3, 1777, addressed to M. de Sartine

This letter is important because it reveals the fact that the Peshwa Madhavrao had made an attempt to form an alliance with the French in 1770 and 1771. But Law had not taken these overtures seriously. It was only when he saw that the Peshwa persisted in his intentions and was disposed to offer to the French reasonable terms that he placed the matter before the Secret Committee of Pondicherry.

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M. de Bellecombe had a long military career. He was in Canada in 1756 with the Regiment of Royal-Roussillon serving in the capacity of Assistant Medical Officer with the rank of a Captain. He was wounded in the battle before Quebec on September 13, 1758. On his return to France, he was decorated with the Cross of St. Louis and given the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel attached to the Regiment of the Royal Grenadiers of Cambise. In this capacity, he took part in the campaign of 1761 in the Army of the Lower-Rhine in which he commanded several detachments during the war. In 1762 he received the order to join as second-in-command a corps of troops at Brest shortly leaving for New Foundland. After the capture of Fort St. John, Bellecombe occupied the place with a garrison of 500 men. But he was attacked by the enemy before the arrival of the squadron and the commander-in-chief, and had to surrender after being seriously wounded. When he returned to France, he was promoted to the rank of a Colonel. Hardly had he recovered when he received the King's order to proceed to Martinique with an infantry corps for the protection of the colony. Bellecombe served here till 1765. He returned home on leave to settle some private affairs. On July 1, 1766, he was appointed Governor of the Isle of Bourbon with the rank of a Brigadier. He occupied this post till November 4, 1773. Three years later he was appointed Governor-General of Pondicherry. He assumed charge of his office on January 1, 1777. Bellecombe was another talented and capable Governor, but he had hardly any scope to display his ability. For, just twenty months after assuming office, he had to face an invasion by the English and surrender Pondicherry. But within this short period, he had established the best relations with Haider Ali Khan. It is true that so far as the Marathas were concerned, his activity was paralysed because of M. de St. Lubin's reluctance to associate himself with Bellecombe.

Unlike Law, who was in favour of an alliance with the Marathas, Bellecombe was convinced that the French

ought to be closely associated with Haider Ali, perhaps because of the proximity of his kingdom to the Carnatic so that he could quickly run to the succour of Pondicherry in case of need. Therefore the first step he took immediately on assumption of office was to dispatch M. de Coutanceau, an officer of high rank, to Shrirangapatan to thrash out all the differences that had arisen between the French and the ruler of Mysore since the Duprat incident. He had every reason to be satisfied with the mission of Coutanceau. However, he was extremely grieved at the internecine war between the Marathas and Haider Ali, the two Indian powers which could be of help to the French in case of war between them and the English. The need of the hour was to bring about a reconciliation between these two powers and Bellecombe was ready to play the role of a mediator. During his visit to the Malabar Coast, he had planned to arrange for a personal interview with the ruler of Mysore and impress upon him the necessity of a close co-operation between him and the Marathas to fight the common enemy i.e. the English. Unfortunately, at the last moment, Bellecombe gave up the attempt on the flimsy excuse that the spot Haider had selected for the meeting was far away and that the journey would cost a good deal to the French exchequer. Soon after war broke out between France and England, and Pondicherry was attacked by the English. In its present state of incomplete fortifications, the place was not expected to hold out for long and surrendered after a gallant resistance of six weeks. The English expressed their admiration for Bellecombe's courageous defence by according the honours of war to him and to his troops.

Letter dated February 3, 1777, to the Peshwa

In this letter Bellecombe informs the Peshwa of his arrival at Pondicherry in the capacity of Governor-General of all the French establishments in India, and communicates to him his King's desire to augment the friendship

that reigned between the Marathas and the French and to turn it to the common advantage of both the nations.

Letter dated August 2, 1777, addressed to M. de Sartine

Bellecombe has not yet received a reply from the Peshwa to his letter in which he had announced to him his arrival in India. He reveals his embarrassment and his annoyance at the appointment of M. de St. Lubin as an envoy to the Maratha Court from the King of France. He had announced himself to the Peshwa as Commandant-General, plenipotentiary to negotiate with all the powers in India. especially with the Marathas, whilst M. de St. Lubin appeared as an envoy, independent of the authority of the Governor of Pondicherry, to make proposals and treaties in the name of the King of France. In his opinion, this conflict of power was derogatory to the prestige of the French nation in India. He refers to the war between the Marathas and Haider Ali and expresses his grief at the sight of these two powers mutually wasting their resources instead of reserving them to fight the common enemy in conjunction with the French.

Letter dated October 15, 1777, addressed to M. de Sartine

This document has already appeared in the previous volume. But it is included here for the convenience of the scholars, for, it indicates a departure in French policy in India. Whereas Law had all along advocated a French alliance with the Marathas, Bellecombe is one of those who subscribed to the view that the French would derive greater advantage from an alliance with Haider Ali.

Letter dated November 12, 1777, addressed to M. de Sartine

This document, already included in the previous volume, is repeated here. It mentions the fact that Bellecombe has received a reply from the Peshwa to his letter announcing his arrival at Pondicherry in the capacity of Commandant-General of all the French establishments in India.

But Bellecombe expresses his surprise that the Peshwa's letter makes no mention of M. de St. Lubin and his mission at Poona. It is obvious that St. Lubin, who presumes that he is superior to and even independent of the Governor of Pondicherry, has deliberately advised the Maratha ministers not to make any mention of his mission to Bellecombe. But the French Governor's conjectures are unjustified.

The Peshwa's reply is full of compliments in highflown oriental style.

Letter dated February 5, 1778, addressed to M. de Sartine

Bellecombe has received news from Picot, French commandant at Mahé, that the mission of M. de St. Lubin no longer appears to engage the attention of the English, that there has been division among the Frenchmen who were in Poona, that the ship le Sartine will not make profitable voyage, that the Captain of the ship M. Couronnat was detained as a prisoner by the Marathas and that they were demanding two lakhs of rupees as his ransom.

Letter dated June 5, 1778, addressed to M. de Sartine

Bellecombe has received news of the revolution at Poona. It is surprising that the details are so exact. Bellecombe feels that the English will not undertake an expedition to Poona because of their fear of an impending war between England and France. The French Governor ardently wishes that the precautions, which the English think they ought to take for the safety of their establishments in India, prevent the execution of a project, the success of which would procure them the greatest advantages and almost deprive the French of any hope of forming an alliance which must always be included in their political combinations in India. But Bellecombe is surprised at the conduct of Haider Ali in making common cause with the English and beguiling his time in capturing places from the Maratha dominions. He concludes that lack of combinations for certain but distant interests is a general

vice of all the Indian governments, and that they do not know how to make momentary sacrifices. Bellecombe has received letters from which it appears that a part of the guard of honour which the Maratha Government had given to M. de St. Lubin has been withdrawn and that even his movements are restricted. This is not surprising in view of the fact that it was a period when the stars of Morobadada Phadnis, a supporter of Raghoba, were in the ascendant and Nana Fadnis himself had retired, though temporarily, from the administration. Bellecombe's prejudice against St. Lubin is self-evident.

Picot was French Commandant at Mahé from 1765 to 1779 with a break of twenty-five months.

Letter dated December 31, 1771, addressed to Law, Governor of Pondicherry

The Maratha agent in the region announces a Maratha expedition to the Coromandel Coast through the south. He is therefore carrying on negotiations with the princes of the region for a suitable passage for the Maratha army. The Kingdom of Coorg appears to have been selected for this purpose. The proposed Maratha expedition puts Picot in an embarrassing position. The Maratha fleet was likely to remain in the neighbourhood of Mahé for a long time and may ask the French for a supply of water. Picot is therefore worried about the attitude he should adopt. He has grievances against the Marathas because their fleet has many a times attacked the French ships sailing on the Malabar Coast. In fact, this was the fleet of Angre who carried on his piracy independently of the Maratha Central Government. In Picot's opinion, the French on the Malabar Coast were at war with the Marathas. Now if he refused to comply with their request for a supply of water, his action would provoke them and expose all the French ships to their attacks. If, on the other hand, he granted their request, his behaviour would perhaps win a friend but he thinks that it would be dishonouring the French flag by not expressing any resentment for the past insults. He therefore seeks Law's guidance in his predicament.

The Supreme Council's reply to M. Picot, dated January 21, 1772

In the opinion of the Council, the Marathas, the most formidable and most solidly established nation in the whole of India, require most tactful handling. If therefore the commandant of the Maratha fleet asked for supplies of water, wood, etc., Picot ought to furnish him the same.

It would be inopportune, they think, to express resentment for the past insults, especially because the Marathas threw the blame for this brigandage on the pirate chief whom they disowned. Besides, Law was thinking of writing to the Peshwa Madhavrao to give orders so that the French establishment and the French ships on the Malabar Coast were no longer exposed to the attacks of the pirates. The Council further adds that, on this occasion, Picot would be dealing directly with the Marathas and not the pirate chiefs, and that therefore the honour of the nation could not be compromised by his action.

Letter dated January 26, 1772, to Law

Before Picot could receive the reply from the Supreme Council, the Marathas had retired to the north and the dry-monsoon was too advanced for a military operation to be put into execution on the Malabar Coast. Picot was naturally delighted at this result.

Letter dated February 28, 1773, addressed to M. de Boynes, Minister for the Navy

In this letter, Picot refers to the attacks on the French ships sailing on the Malabar Coast by the Maratha pirates. Such attacks, being very frequent, were ruinous to the commerce of the French Company on this coast. To meet the situation, Picot suggests the dispatch to the Malabar Coast of two frigates which could even go and attack the pirates in their principal port of Gheria or Vijaydurg and if possible, capture it. In the opinion of the Minister, the commerce of the Company at Mahé was not of such volume as to compensate for the expenses of an armament of this kind. Secondly, Picot's proposal was not in keeping with the policy which Law was advocating, i.e. of not offending the Marathas. Moreover, if the enterprise did not come off, there was the danger of the Maratha pirates taking their revenge against Mahé which place was not in a position to defend itself. Finally, the French had no

desire to form new establishments on the Malabar Coast. Picot gives interesting information about the strength of the pirate fleet, their crew, their strong points and week points, and their mode of attack.

Letter dated September 18, 1777, addressed to M. de Sartine

In the previous Volume, reference has already been made to Bellecombe's and Picot's jealousy for and prejudice against M. de St. Lubin. As regards the amount of Rs. 12,000 allocated to St. Lubin by the Minister, Picot, by now, has realised the difficulty in getting in touch with the French envoy at the Maratha Court. Why does he then undertake upon himself to divide the amount into two, pay one half of it immediately to him through Briancourt, the French Consul at Surat, and pay the other half at a later date? The Minister has certainly not authorised him to do so.

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Lagrenèe de Mezière had been in the service of the French East India Company since 1742. Fifteen years later, he became a member of the Pondicherry Council. He was appointed second-in-command of Pondicherry in 1768 and in that capacity, he was a member of the Political Committee of Pondicherry. He was designated to take over the office of the Commandant-General in case of death or retirement of Law. He was also President of the Bankers' Clearing House.

Letter dated February 19, 1772, addressed to the Controller-General

Lagrenée refers to the dispatch of Maratha agents to Pondicherry to propose to the French the transport to India of all the troops stationed at the Isles, with a proportionate artillery train and the necessary munitions of war, and their participation in the siege of Shrirangapatan and capture of Haider Ali. In return, they engage to cede to the French territory to the east of the Ghats adjoining the Carnatic and fetching forty lakhs of rupees as annual revenue. Lagrenée states that the only means left to the French nation to lift itself from the abasement in which it has sunk in India lies in this offer of the Marathas. But at the same time, he fears that as soon as the French are united with the Marathas against Haider Ali, the English would fly to his succour to save him from destruction, for, their political system would dictate it as an absolute necessity for them. In that case, says Lagrenée, the prospects would be doubtful and the French would be involved in a long war, the results of which would only turn to the advantage of the English. Surprisingly enough, Lagrenée, in the same breath, avers that it is quite certain that from the moment the Marathas declare themselves against the English, they can deprive them of all their revenues by ravaging their territories and thereby stop their trade completely, and that within two campaigns the English would be reduced to their last extremity. Nevertheless, there is one discrepancy in the statement of Lagrenèe.

In the proposals which the Peshwa Madhavrao made to Law (pp. 47-48), there is no mention that the Marathas wanted the French to help them in their war with Haider Ali. In fact, Madhavrao was quite capable of dealing with Haider Ali by himself and without external aid. But he was aware that the English would play some mischief and join Haider Ali. He therefore wanted to neutralise their activity and for that purpose demanded the presence of the French at Pondicherry. Lagrenée feels that the Marathas had a special interest in destroying the power of the English in the Carnatic. They had given protection to Reza Ali, son of the late Chanda Saheb, Nawab of Arcot, for whom they were determined to create a principality in the Carnatic. There was a report that they intended to cede to him the towns of Tiruchirapali, Madura and Tondaiman.

Letter dated October 1, 1772, to M. de Boynes, Minister for the Navy

The contents of this letter are almost the same as in the previous letter. Lagrenée mentions that the English had never any inclination to accept the proposals of the Marathas to join them against Haider Ali, however advantageous they were. This is not borne out by any evidence either from the Maratha state papers or from those of the English. In fact, it was the other way round. First, the Madras Government had made overtures to Madhavrao in the beginning of 1767 during his war with Haider Ali and then the Bombay Government in November of the same year during the war of the English with the ruler of Mysore. But Madhavrao had spurned both these offers.

M. de Grandmaison had been Commissioner for War in France and in that capacity was charged with different items of supplies. He had the advantage of personally watching the operation of the regulations followed in the French armies.

Proposal made to the Minister for the Navy and the Colonies with a view to procuring the alliance of the Marathas for France, which was the only way to stop the progress of the English in India:

(There are five memorials on this subject. The last four are very nearly duplicates of the first one. But the extra information in each one is important, and therefore all have been included here.)

M. de Grandmaison's original plan was to go to Delhi, get the troops of the Empire placed on the lines of the military establishment of France, train them in all the exercises and for all possible manoeuvres and employ them afterwards to impress upon the whole of India the superiority which this Empire ought to enjoy in that country. Grandmaison believed that having succeeded in achieving this goal, it would not be difficult for him to impress upon the administrators at Delhi how they ought to dread the ambition of the English and how an alliance with a commercial and powerful European nation like France would be indispensable for them. He further hoped to induce them to grant cessions and other concessions to France to enable her to repair the losses, which she had sustained in this part of the world, and revive her commerce. This project was favourably received by M. Poivre, an influential person in the Department of India in Paris, who, aware of the state of chaos in the Mughal Empire, advised Grandmaison to change his plan and direct himself to the Marathas, a discreet and warlike nation which would most eagerly receive the offer of his services because it would be anxious to profit by the troubles of the Mughal Emperor to seize this Empire and

sovereignty of the Indian dominion. In his opinion, the Marathas needed an infantry which could stand up to that of the English, and they also needed gunners and clever ordnance workers for the casting of guns as well as for the manufacture of arms. Grandmaison accepted this wise counsel and proposed to go to Goa from where he would afterwards repair to the capital of the Marathas. He would pick up his men, twenty-one in number excluding himself, and embark them as merchants. As he did not have sufficient funds to meet the expenses of the expedition amounting to 40,120 francs i.e. Rs. 16,000, he sought the assistance of the Minister to help him to procure sufficient funds for this purpose. He was prepared to proceed 6,000 leagues away from his home and face the greatest risks.

The second is a memorial on behalf of Grandmaison. It appears that he was advised to reduce the number of his men from 22 to 16. But at the same time, it was pointed out that if Grandmaison was to meet with a good reception from the Marathas, he must take with him a few thousand cannon-balls, four pounders and twelve pounders, and some bomb-shells for which he would pay. The Minister was assured that the activity and industry of M. de Grandmaison would work a great change in the political situation of India and that he would employ all the reasoning and the springs of politics to urge the Marathas to furnish financial assistance to France, a concession usually granted to a power which was expected to play the role of an auxiliary.

The third memorial is very nearly the duplicate of the first one. But the date 1773 is an enigma. In the memorial, there is a reference to M. Anquetil de Briancourt as Consul of France at Surat. Now, Briancourt arrived at Surat in this capacity on November 5, 1774. It is possible that Grandmaison learnt of his appointment, made in August 1773, while he was still in France. But there is a further reference to a proposal made by the Marathas to cede the small port of Bassein to the French. This proposal was

made by the Marathas to Briancourt in the beginning of 1775, after the wanton aggression by the English in capturing the Thana fort on December 31, 1774. Secondly, in this memorial, Grandmaison makes an appeal to M. Poivre to forcefully explain the importance of this project to the Minister. But the following memorial mentions the fact that Grandmaison had prepared this plan in consultation with the Minister, M. de Boynes. There was thus no necessity to explain the importance of this project to M. de Boynes. In our opinion, M. de Sartine had now (January 1775) succeeded M. de Boynes as Minister for the Navy and hence the necessity arose to recommend Grandmaison's plan to the new Minister. Therefore the date of this document ought to be October 1775 and not October 1773.

From the next memorial we learn that Grandmaison had proposed his project on India to M. de Boynes, Minister for the Navy, in the beginning of his administration, i.e. in the beginning of 1771. He had prepared a plan on this subject in consultation with the Minister in June 1771, in which it was decided that the Navy should give him a free passage to India with his men and his cargo, but that he should buy the materials at his own expense. Unable to procure funds necessary for the purchase of the materials, Grandmaison repeatedly made representations in 1772, 1773 and 1774 that the Navy should make an advance for this expense. On December 27, 1774, M. Poivre, who had approved of the plan and advised Grandmaison to proceed to the Court of the Marathas rather than to that of the Mughal Emperor, assured him that he would explain the utility of his project to the Minister if he got an opportunity to do so. Unfortunately, Poivre had soon to leave for India and did not find time to speak to the Minister about Grandmaison's project and courage. As it was a question of only proceeding to the capital of the Marathas and staying there till the complete execution of the project, there was rather a need for an active person

who knew how to speak to and negotiate with all the persons with whom he would have to deal, get out of the difficulty according to the circumstances and cleverly handle the interests of France. Grandmaison possessed these qualities in addition to infinite courage. Besides, it was necessary to give to the Maratha troops, independently of the training in European manoeuvres, a military establishment less expensive, of course, than that of the French, but sufficient to keep order in the corps and in all the parts of the military administration. There was therefore no better person to fulfil this objective than Grandmaison who had been Commissioner for War, who had been charged with different items of supplies and who had personally seen the operation of the regulations which were followed in the French armies. From this memorial, it appears that the number of men Grandmaison would like to carry with him to India has been raised from the original 21 to 35, excluding himself.

The last memorial is again on behalf of Grandmaison. It once again emphasises the importance of the project and makes an appeal to the Minister to expedite its execution.

Grandmaison left France sometime in 1776, definitely prior to the departure of M. de Montigny (French Envoy to the Court of the Mughal Emperor) from France on October 3, 1776. Montigny seems to know about Grandmaison and his project. When he arrived at Alexandria on March 4, 1777, he learnt about the death of Grandmaison and a part of his craftsmen on the way from Mocha to Surat. Perhaps Grandmaison and his men had to suffer a lot during the journey and this must have led to their death. But certain pertinent questions arise. From the fourth memorial, it appears that Grandmaison was to travel on a ship of 800 tonnage with a crew of 60. So, why did he travel by the Suez route? And if he selected that route, obviously, he did not carry the materials (iron shots, steel shots, lead shots, gun-flint, etc.) which he had meant

for the Marathas. Possibly the Navy did not make the advance to enable Grandmaison to purchase the materials and was also not prepared to give him and to his men a free passage to India. Therefore, burning with intense patriotism for his country, the Frenchman decided to leave for India on his own with the money he got from an inheritance. Next, a sure source mentions that all Grandmaison's papers fell into the hands of the English. Did he travel on an English ship ? What happened to the rest of the craftsmen ?

At the auction sale of Grandmaison's articles in Surat, Briancourt, the French Consul, purchased two pistols, the finest he had ever seen since his arrival at Surat, and he says that these were meant for the Mughal Emperor. Evidently, Briancourt had met Grandmaison in France and that the latter had told him at that time that these pistols were meant for the Mughal Emperor. Of course, in view of Grandmaison's change of programme, these pistols were destined for the Peshwa.

De Repentigny, Colonel in the Regiment of Pondicherry, was interim commandant at Mahé from September 1774 to December 1775.

After the wanton aggression by the English on the Thana fort on December 31, 1774, the Marathas decided to approach the French, inveterate enemies of the English, for assistance. They first contacted Briancourt, French Consul at Surat, in the beginning of 1775. The Marathas were ready to cede to the French a port of their choice on the Malabar Coast on the condition that latter supplied the 200 soldiers from Pondicherry to subjugate Raghoba and also check the ambitious designs of the English. But Briancourt stipulated that the Marathas should first give proof of their good faith and friendship by granting a firman for the safety of all the French ships sailing on the Maratha Coast. Fearing that the negotiations might drag on, the Poona Government then thought of taking up the matter with the Chief of the French settlement of Mahé. The Maratha envoys were entrusted with letters from the Peshwa and his minister. The letters were purely complimentary but they announced that the two envoys would personally inform the Governor of the object of their mission which was to propose on behalf of their King a treaty of alliance with the French nation to make war with the English. The Marathas offered to the French all the establishments occupied by the English on the Malabar Coast. In addition, they would pay thirty to forty lakhs as expenses of the French troops. The interim Chief of Mahé, Col. Repentigny, replied that nothing could give the French greater pleasure than a treaty of alliance with the Marathas. Since he himself had no powers to conclude such a treaty, he directed the Maratha envoys to Pondicherry. These proposals were dispatched by Law through M. Beylié, a French officer who was proceeding on leave to France, with instructions to deliver them personally to the Minister.

In the first of the two Memorials, the author establishes the necessity to attack the English establishments in India. He first of all refers to the predominant position the English have acquired in India with the result that they have usurped the sole monopoly of trade in this country. This jealous nation, he says, will never relax its advantages so long as it maintains its predominance. It is therefore necessary for France, he thinks, to exert herself to change this situation, and it is only by means of war that she can do so. And if it is decided to attack the English in India, the author suggests that the French should commence with an attack on Bombay. The English there were openly at war with the Marathas, their neighbours, the only power in India which has maintained its independence. The English design is to subjugate the Malabar Coast on which the Marathas predominate. So far their attempt has not been successful, but sooner or later they are bound to succeed. Therefore, in his opinion, if this Maratha nation finds that the French have come to attack Bombay, it will offer them its co-operation. Thus, from the very start, the French would be joined by an ally, the most powerful in India. The author's comrades had been taken to Bombay as prisoners and they had studied the weak points of the place. According to them, it was easy to enter and descend into the island of Bombay from the side of the island of Salsette; 1,000 to 1,200 Englishment formed its garrison. If therefore the French made a surprise attack on Bombay, it could not resist for a long time. As soon as it was captured, the first care of the French commander ought to be to conclude a treaty with the Marathas, says the author. He is confident that the French could obtain a very advantageous one. He proposes that the French should deliver Bombay to the Marathas after they had helped in expelling the English from Surat and other establishments on the Malabar Coast. In return for Bombay, the French could demand some port on this coast, like Chaul, Bassein, etc. The location would enable them to carry on the most extensive trade, not only with India but also with Persia, the Red Sea and the Eastern Coasts of Africa.

In the second Memorial, after relating the political situation of India from 1739 to 1780, the author declares that it is the Malabar Coast which offers to the French all the advantages from the point of view of establishing their trade and fixing the centre of their forces. He further argues that the possession of Bombay would definitely bring this coast under their influence and put them within reach of outstripping all the European powers in their political and military operations in India. And as a corollary, he adds, it would be incumbent on the French to form friendship with the Court of Poona in preference to all the other powers.

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Chevalier came to Chandernagore as a second grade clerk in 1752. After three years he became a member of the Council at Chandernagore. In that capacity, he visited the King of Assam and succeeded in establishing a factory at Goalpara. Chandernagore fell to the English in March 1757 and Chevalier was made prisoner (not immediately). But it seems he remained at Calcutta and was doing business under an assumed name. He returned to Chandernagore in 1764 and continued to carry on business on his own individual account. He was a trader, money-lender, banker and even an underwriter for marine insurance. In July 1767 he was appointed Director-General of all the French establishments in Bengal.

No other Frenchman in India has submitted such a large number of projects to his government for diplomatic alliances and military operations against the English in India. For some time after assuming charge of the French possessions in Bengal, Chevalier tried to secure his national interests by a policy of friendly and amicable relations with the English. He was an excellent host, like a true Frenchman, and his residence was the meeting-place for most of the leading personalities of Calcutta, including the Governor. This policy of personal contact succeeded up to 1769. The English then became increasingly jealous of the prosperity of the French factories in Bengal. The ditch around Chandernagore was forcibly filled up and the English used their political power in the province to obstruct French trade and commerce despite the provisions of the treaty of 1763. When repeated protests to the Calcutta Council failed to redress the grievances, Chevalier, in desperation, turned to the north Indian princes and tried to form an anti-English coalition supported by French troops.

There are three distinct phases in Chevalier's projects about French intervention in India: the first from 1769 to the installation of the Emperor Shah Alam at Delhi in 1772; the second from 1772 to the formation of the Tatta

project in 1774; and the third from 1775 to 1778, when hostilities broke out between France and England by the sudden capture of Chandernagore by the English.

In the first period, Chevalier's ideas are rather vague and not based on any definite line of action. He thought that the rapid expansion of English power had so much antagonised the north Indian princes that it was not at all difficult to combine all of them in a joint attack on Bengal.

In the second period, Chevalier's ideas take a more definite and concrete shape. He now concentrated on a solid alliance with the Mughal Emperor. He advocated a policy of strengthening the hands of the Emperor and enabling him to assert his authority over his former vassals, who had now become independent rulers, by offering him 5,000 French troops and organising a large force of sipahees trained and armed in the European fashion. In that case, the mere extension of the Emperor's authority would mean an extension of French political influence in north India, and when the opportune moment came, a joint attack could be launched on Bengal by land and naval forces. Chevalier made repeated representations to the French Government to send immediately 5,000 troops to the assistance of the Emperor. But the dispatch of such a large force to Delhi would be a signal for war between the French and the English. So the French Government, unwilling to reopen hostilities on the Indian issue, turned a deaf year to the urgent representations of Chevalier.

In the third period, Chevalier changed his plan to obviate the difficulty of English opposition. The new plan was based on a solid alliance with the Emperor and the acquisition of the province of Tatta, about 80 kms. to the east of Karachi, for the French. The French would keep a large garrison in Tatta and lend a small corps of troops to the Emperor. In case of necessity, the whole body of French troops stationed in the newly acquired territory could

proceed to Delhi, effect a junction with the Imperial forces and swoop down upon Bengal. The advantage of this plan over the previous one was that since Tatta was situated far away from the English possessions in India, the English were not likely to oppose the landing of French troops there with the same vehemence with which they would oppose the dispatch of 5,000 French troops direct to Delhi. Fortunately for Chevalier, this plan seems to have received due attention in Paris. Towards the end of 1776, the French Government sent M. de Montigny to India, along with other missions, to give a final report on the Tatta project. Montigny, who, due to difficulties beyond his control, arrived in India in May 1778, reported that the plan on Tatta was a chimera and completely impracticable. Chandernagore fell into the hands of the English in July 1778 and Chevalier was made a prisoner of war. With his arrest, terminated a long chain of activity of this energetic, versatile and patriotic Frenchman.

Dispatch dated March 15, 1769, addressed to the Minister of the Navy : Plan of attack in India

Chevalier concentrates on an attack on Chittagong and the English establishments in the eastern part of Bengal as far as the frontiers of Assam. These were mostly defenceless and could be captured without any difficulty. This was the richest part from the point of view of revenue as well as of commerce, and would not only enable the French to defray their expenses but also furnish them cargo necessary for Europe. With the number of forces recommended, viz. 4,000, Calcutta could not hold out for long. But if the French forces were needed elsewhere to subdue the rest of the territory hostile to the French, Chevalier suggests the formation of alliances with the Indian princes. Among these, the Marathas of Cuttack were the sworn enemies of the English because they had been deprived of the Chauth of Bengal. Janoji Bhonsle had even made overtures to Chevalier for assistance in men and munitions to succeed in the conquest of Bengal.

Dispatch, dated January 6, 1771, addressed to Monseigneur Terray, Controller-General for Finance

Shah Alam II has accepted the Maratha proposal to restore him to his throne and has returned to Delhi. He had to sign a treaty by which he has granted to the Marathas in perpetuity the right of Chauthai in all the Empire. In their turn, the Marathas have undertaken to bring back under the domination of the Emperor all the princes and the governors who had ceased to recognise his authority, and force them to pay him all the revenues along with the arrears. This treaty has caused great anxiety to the English, for, the Marathas have already demanded an account of all the revneues of Bengal. A confrontation between the English and the Marathas thus becomes inevitable. The latter are aware of the superiority of the Europeans to their own troops and for this purpose, they want to engage a certain number of them in their service. Janoji Bhonsle, one of the Maratha chiefs with whom Chevalier has always had friendly relations and whose possessions adjoin Bengal, has already approached him with a request to furnish him 700 to 800 Frenchmen with arms and ammunition. He offers to defray all the expenses of the French troops. Janoji's demand is, moreover, supported by the other three Maratha generals who commanded all the forces camping in the vicinity of Delhi. But in the present situation of the French, Chevalier has no other alternative but to give evasive replies with all sorts of assurances of goodwill, although he realises the full advantage of these proposals. However, in order to obtain information about all the activities that were taking place in these quarters with a view to procuring means for his nation to profit by the favourable opportunities that might occur, Chevalier has decided to station at the courts of these princes some intelligent persons capable of locking after its interests. M. Visage, a surgeon by profession, had left about eight months back to the camp of Janoji, and M. Dujarday, ex-employee of the French Company, was to leave shortly

for the camp of the Emperor and for that of the three Maratha generals. Moreover, Mir Kasim, ex-Nawab of Bengal, has recently written a pressing letter to Chevalier. He is intimately associated with the three Maratha generals, Tukoji Holkar, Mahadji Shinde and Ramchandra Ganesh. They have promised to take him to Bengal and restore him to his former position. One of the Maratha generals is preparing to descend into the province of Bengal to commit incursions therein with 50,000 cavalry. But he has no chance of success in this enterprise without French assistance. Chevalier regrets that the impotency of the French does not permit them to turn this favourable occasion to account. And yet it is not money which would be lacking. It is easy, he says, to maintain, without having to pay a farthing, a thousand men with Janoji, an equal number with Mir Kasim and about 3,000 men under the Emperor. Picked officers can be employed under the different princes for organising sipahees and training them in European exercises and manoeuvres. If things are thus prepared, says Chevalier, the English will find themselves assailed from all sides in the interior of the country at the earliest moment of rupture, whilst simultaneously, the French squadron, prepared at the Isle of France, would arrive and likewise attack them from the river. Chevalier also proposes, in preference to any other nation, an alliance with the Marathas, the most powerful and most war-like nation which offers the largest resources because of the prodigious number of its cavalry. It is already well-disposed to them, he avers, for, it has made the first overtures to them. But he warns that in whatever treaty it might conclude with the French, its primary demand would always be a supply of European troops. It is no use giving it empty promises, because that would be forfeiting all its confidence and disgracing the French.

Project on India, August 25, 1772

As soon as the treaty between the Marathas and the Emperor was signed, the latter at once sent circular letters

to all the subhedars of the provinces, requiring them to recognise his authority and submit to the royal treasury an account of all the revenues which they had enjoyed. But Shuja-ud-daulah refuses to submit and is awaiting the issue at the head of a sufficiently large army. The English, in their own interest, are bound to help the Nawab. The Emperor draws his main strength from the assistance the Marathas can give him. However, fully aware of the superiority of European troops to the native troops, he has already sounded Chevalier with a view to finding out if he can secure him 4,000 to 5,000 men. He offers to pay in advance all the expenses necessary for their transport and promises to maintain them afterwards at his expense. Chevalier feels that with this corps combined with his own forces and those of the Marathas and with the large number of sipahees which would be raised on the European model, the Emperor would soon definitely reduce to obedience every one who would dare to resist him. In Chevalier's opinion, even the English cannot withstand such forces, further reinforced by those which would certainly be dispatched to Pondicherry with all expedition at the time of the declaration of war. The latter would attack Madras while the Delhi army would march against Begnal, and by this fortunate diversion, the two principal English establishments, each forced to defend itself by its own forces and without the possibility of helping each other, would soon succumb under the efforts of the decided superiority of the French. Besides, the French would hold Bombay in check and give it occupation through the Marathas who are its neighbours and who, in their capacity as protectors of the Emperor, would become the friends of the French by their alliance with him. This nation is today, adds Chevalier, the most formidable power in Hindustan and consequently the one with which it is important for the French to be solidly bound by friendship. Chevalier considers them as a very essential party in the execution of his project.

Agreement of Mahadji Shinde with Chevalier

This document contains the terms of alliance which the Maratha chief, Mahadji Shinde, proposed to Chevalier. The latter had asked René Madec, the French adventurer now in the service of the Emperor, to induce Mahadji Shinde to form an alliance with the French against the English. The French agent Dujarday, who was at this moment at Delhi, was also a party to this agreement. When the treaty was signed by Shinde, the Peshwa Madhavrao had perhaps already died, but the news had not yet reached Delhi. These terms were dispatched by Chevalier to the Minister for his ratification.

Dispatch dated February 28, 1773, addressed to M. de Boynes, Minister for the Navy

Janoji Bhonsle has died. It is a serious blow for the French nation to which he was very sincerely attached. The Peshwa Madhavrao has also died. But Chevalier mistakes him for one of the Maratha generals operating at Delhi, and since he has been replaced by Shinde, Chevalier thinks that this accident has not caused any change in the affairs of the Empire. While waiting for the ratification of his project to send 4,000 French troops to Delhi by the Minister, Chevalier tries to persuade the French party of Gardé in the service of Bassalat Jang and that of Madec in the service of the Raja of the Jats, to offer their services to the Emperor. The two detachments, when combined, would form a body of about 8,000 men, well trained and drilled in the European type of warfare. Chevalier feels that if the French could join 4,000 to 5,000 Europeans, as he has proposed, to this army of 8,000 men, the French will have a decided superiority over the English, especially when they (the French) will have the Marathas on their side. Mahadji Shinde has already signed a conditional treaty with Chevalier by which he undertakes to join the French troops on their arrival in India. However, Chevalier is worried by the fourth article of the treaty

which stipulates that when Bengal is captured, Madhavrao, the great Maratha prince, who is his master, will receive all what legitimately belongs to him. In our opinion, the article only means that Madhavrao will receive from Bengal the amount of the Chauth which legitimately belongs to him. For Chevalier, the impending war between the Emperor and the Marathas, on one side, and Shuja-ud-daulah and the English, on the other, is the most favourable occasion to dispatch 4,000 to 5,000 French soldiers to Delhi. In order that the Marathas should have an upperhand in this war, Chevalier intends to ask all the Frenchmen in the service of Shuja-ud-daulah to leave him and proceed to Delhi and join the Emperor.

Dispatch dated April 15, 1773, addressed to M. de Boynes

An agent has arrived at Chandernagore on behalf of the Emperor and on that of the Marathas with letters from both the sides in which most urgent solicitations are made for the participation of the French in the common cause by sending 4,000 to 5,000 men to Delhi. The agent has instructions to propose to Chevalier, on behalf of the Emperor and on that of the Marathas, a treaty which is most complete and most advantageous to the French. In return for this assistance, the Emperor and his allies the Marathas offer to pay to the French for all the expenses, grant them the full liberty of trade free from any levy, cede to them the possessions which they can reasonably demand or if they prefer, pay them an annual revenue to be agreed upon; and if, by joining in the capacity of auxiliaries, they succeed in expelling the English from Bengal, this province will be granted to them on the same rights as the English, provided they undertake to pay annually thirty lakhs to the Emperor and twenty-five lakhs to the Marathas.

Dispatch dated October 3, 1773, addressed to M. de Boynes

Chevalier, perhaps the only Frenchman, feels that the Marathas can soon subdue the English by employing their

peculiar type of warfare known as the guerilla warfare. In his opinion, it would be impossible for the heavy English artillery to ever join a light Maratha cavalry which, he says, can cover 60 kms in a day. In fact, Haider had successfully employed it in both his wars with the English, and the Marathas were past masters in this type of warfare. The envoy, who had come to Chandernagore on behalf of the Emperor and on that of the Marathas, refuses to return to Delhi unless he sees some definite progress in his negotiations with Chevalier. René Madec, who had joined the Emperor at the urgent solicitations of Chevalier, could not get along with his new master and has enlisted himself in the service of Mahadji Shinde.

Dispatch dated February 2, 1774, addressed to M. de Boynes

The Marathas have evacuated the neighbourhood of Delhi and returned home. A revolution has taken place at Poona. Narayanrao, the Peshwa, has been assassinated and his uncle Raghunathrao *alias* Raghoba has proclaimed himself Peshwa. Chevalier now realises that it is this revolution at Poona which had prevented the Marathas from running to the succour of the Raja of Tanjaour, whose kingdom the English had attacked and conquered, and not the reason which he had wrongly stated in the previous dispatch, viz. that the English had purchased their inaction by spreading money among the principal nobles at the Maratha Court. Dujarday, the French agent, has left Delhi to proceed to Poona, of course, at the suggestion of Chevalier, to watch over the interests of the French nation and win friends among the Maratha nobles. He is already intimately known to Mahadji Shinde. Janoji is dead, but Chevalier has established most friendly relations with his son Mudhoji who has assured him help when needed.

Dispatch dated December 30, 1775, addressed to M. de Sartine who has taken over as Minister for the Navy from M. de Boynes

Chevalier refers to the war of the Marathas with the English. The Supreme Council of Calcutta, without whose

sanction the Bombay Government had declared this war, disapproves it and sends Col. Upton to Poona to conclude peace. Chevalier feels that the Marathas should take a bold decision, for, if they once happened to know their strength, the English would soon be exterminated on all sides. Chevalier, of course, refers to their tactics of guerilla warfare by which, without ever risking a battle, they can wage a destructive war, burning and pillaging the whole territory and destroying all manufactures. Then the English, without either provisions or trade or revenue, would be unable to defray their expenses, feed and maintain their troops, load their ships for Europe and would be forced to submit to the victor on such conditions which he would choose to dictate to them. In his opinion, the Marathas are the only Indian nation capable of ever destroying the power of the English. That is why, says Chavalier, if the French one day think of striking some blows in this country, they must begin by winning over the Marathas to their side by sacrificing everything to secure their friendship. He argues that the Marathas, in their interest, would be inclined to ally themselves with the French when it would be a question of attacking the English. For, they have to recover the fourth part of the revenues which the English have been enjoying since they entered into possession of Bengal and the Carnatic.

Dispatch dated March 17, 1777, addressed to M. de Bellecombe, Governor-General of Pondicherry

Chevalier gives replies to the questions put to him by Bellecombe, who has replaced Law as Governor of Pondicherry. The alliances with the Emperor and the Marathas would suit the French best. Strangely enough, Chevalier states that the Marathas are necessary for the French less for the service to be expected from them than to prevent them, in the beginning, from doing them all the mischief they are capable of. The French would easily have them on their side, if they were strong enough by concluding with them a treaty which was advantageous to them but

which could be revoked when the French would be in a position not to fear them and create awe about themselves. According to Chevalier, the present hatred of the Marathas for the English, out of the resentment at the protection the latter have given to the traitor Raghoba, would be a favourable occasion to enlist the Marathas on the side of the French. Chevalier forgets the fact that none of the Indian princes, who would seek their alliance, would ever allow the French to occupy a preponderant position like the English. Law, from his experience of Indian affairs, had realised this fact.

Dispatch dated December 15, 1777, addressed to M. de Sartine

The Supreme Council of Calcutta has been heavily censured by the Company for its attempt to stop the Bombay Government from profiting by such a fine opportunity to humble the Maratha power, a project which the English nation had formed since long. It has orders to renew the attempt and spare nothing to achieve the desired goal. Consequently, the Council has recently dispatched several agents to win over allies from among the Maratha nation. They have sent one to Mudhoji at Nagpur and another to Shinde. Raghoba himself is the moving spirit behind these moves. But the English intrigue could not be handled with sufficient secrecy. Two Maratha chiefs, Raghunathrao, commandant of Jhansi and Baburao, that of Gwalior, got wind of it and write letters to Chevalier to urge Bellecombe to form an alliance with the Marathas. For, the Court of Poona is ready to ally itself with the French and ask them for a body of troops and a train of artillery. Chevalier has communicated their views to Bellecombe. But the latter can do nothing in the matter for want of money, troops and other resources. Chevalier feels that once the interests of the Marathas were bound with those of the French, the latter become invincible and capable of fulfilling for their benefit the vast projects which the English have been forming. Chevalier suggests the necessity

of keeping a Waquil with Mudhoji Bhonsle to dissuade him from entering into the alliance which the English were proposing to him.

Letter dated February 18, 1778, addressed to M. de Sartine

This is the last letter he is addressing to the Minister, as he was arrested by the English in July of that year. It is appropriately very touching. It begins with the words: "My heart bleeds at all the events I witness." This remark is the outcome of the hostilities that have been declared by the English against the Marathas. He has heard a report that the hostilities have already begun. If that is true, Chevalier thinks that it is the most serious and most important event that could happen on the Indian political scene, since the fate of India is indispensably bound with it. If the Marathas succumb, there is no power, he says, that can either balance that of the English or oppose the execution of their vast projects and their ambitious designs. All the provinces will then pass under their yoke. He therefore prays that the French in India promptly receive forces and orders to act. This war between the Marathas and the English would be the most favourable event which, according to Chevalier, heaven could have prepared for France. United with the Marathas, the French would save their power and the former, in their turn, would become the instruments of the grandeur and power of the French, and consequently, of the destruction of their common enemies.

It would not be out of place to comment here on Chevalier's plan to dispatch 4,000 to 5,000 French soldiers to Delhi. It is surprising that Chevalier should have so completely forgotten the existing political situation in India. His arguments could have been justified in a situation before 1761 when there was a balance of power between the French and the English in India. But now the French power and influence had been completely wiped

out while the English had become a preponderent power in this country. In his daily affairs, Chevalier was experiencing the effects of the law of ' might is right ' at their hands. They would certainly not bother about the law of equity. As soon as they would find that the French action portended a potential danger to their position in India, they would stop it by hook or crook, even by going to the extent of declaring war against the French. Chevalier is obviously ignorant of the situation in France. Choiseul, one of the most competent French ministers, who had been organising the army and the navy with a view to avenging the defeat of 1763, was dismissed in 1770 at the instance of the King's mistress. The King himself was engrossed in his shameful debaucheries; he had neither time nor money for the national weal. Under no circumstances would he indulge in a war with England. Chevalier also forgets that the Marathas would never have allowed the French to send independently such a large force to the Emperor, because there was the danger that the Emperor would one day turn these arms against themselves. They would only favour an alliance in which they played the leading role. Even the French Minister has not failed to notice the reality of this position and has raised the doubt whether the Marathas would be willing to offer their co-operation to make the Emperor so powerful. Be that as it may, Chevalier's unrealistic approach to the Indian political situation may be open to severe criticism, but there cannot be any doubt about the sincerity of his patriotic fervour.

This Collection can be classified into three sections. A part of it contains the correspondence of Lallée, a French adventurer then in the service of Bassalat Jang; another part pertains to the mission of M. de Montigny at the Court of Delhi and the third relates to his activities at the Maratha Court. For reasons which have been explained at the beginning, we have not dropped any part of this collection. Moreover, the correspondence of Lallée and that of Montigny from May 1779 are so closely related that it would have been improper to separate them. They have therefore been retained as they exist in the original French Register.

DE LALLEE

Since the fall of Pondicherry in 1761, a unit consisting of a few unfortunate Frenchmen was left behind in India, first under the command of Zéphire or Babel. He was succeeded by Gardé, who, because of his age, could no longer stand the strain of military campaigns and handed over the command to de Lallée. This Frenchman arrived in India with General Lally and soon rose to the post of Quarter-Master of Cavalry. After the fall of Pondicherry, he returned to Europe. On the way, his boat was captured by the English who deprived him of all his savings. He never pardoned the English for the rigorous treatment they gave him. He returned to India and entered the service of Bassalat Jang. He soon distinguished himself and became the leader of the party, some time in August 1774. His services were recognised by the King who awarded him the brevet of a Major in July 1775. Lallée's party, known as the Swiss Party, consisted of 500 Europeans, 2,000 sipahees and 1,000 topases. This corps served Bassalat Jang faithfully and the prince also expressed his satisfaction at its services. The men belonging to Lallée's corps were paid and treated better and there was also a greater measure of liberty and equality among them. This was the reason why more men at Pondicherry wanted to join Lallée's

corps in preference to Russel's which was in the service of Haider Ali and which was authorised by the French Government. Lallée was dismissed by Bassalat Jang under English pressure in January 1779. Thereupon he approached the Maratha General Parsharam Bhau Patwardhan who could not afford his costly services. He was in Nizam Ali's service for some time, but he did not seem to be happy because of the moderate salary he was offered. He had reluctantly accepted this offer as a stopgap arrangement in order to avoid the disbandment of his corps which could render useful service to his nation in case the French squadron appeared in India. He was therefore most anxious to join the Marathas, for, with their powerful support he could serve his nation much better and thus take his revenge upon the English. But at the moment the Maratha Government was awaiting a reply from the Bombay Government on the question of Raghoba's surrender. There was thus no chance of immediate acceptance of his services. In the end they informed him that they were unable to accept his services. It is true that Lallée had dictated very high terms, but it was the usual practice in this country to demand much more to arrive at a reasonable figure. We believe that if there was any serious inclination on the part of the Marathas to enlist his services, he would have definitely brought down the figure. In our opinion, it was a serious blunder on the part of Nana Fadnis to rejetc Lallée's services. His unit was well trained and disciplined in European warfare. With Lallée in the army of Mahadji Shinde, the story of the latter's encounters with Captain Popham and Major Camac in Central India would have been written differently. Nevertheless, Haider Ali was at this time most anxious to enrol Lallée's services and pressed him hard, offering him very attractive terms for this purpose, in view of his contemplated rupture with the English. Willy-nilly, he accepted the offer. He rendered yeoman's service first to Haider and then to his son, Tipu Sultan, and died in action at Darrapur on October 7, 1790. Unlike Conte de Boigne, Perron and Madec, who

returned to France to enjoy the vast wealth they had amassed in India, Lallée seems to have considered India as his own country and breathed his last there.

DE MONTIGNY

Montigny's role in India has to be divided into two periods, the first from 1778 to 1780 and the second from 1781 to 1788. We are concerned here with the first period. War had broken out between England and her American Colonies. Thus, at long last, the opportunity had come for France to avenge the humiliations of the Treaty of Paris (1763). Although the Court of Versailles had not yet made up its mind to declare war against England, it decided to establish contact with the Indian princes. In consideration of the several memorials and plans which had been submitted to them since the re-establishment of the French in India in 1765, the French authorities decided to send M. de Montigny, Lieutenant Colonel in the King's army, to Delhi to explore the practicability of the Tatta project and confer with René Madec on the subject of the memorandum which he had sent to the French Minister and enter into arrangements with him accordingly.

Montigny started from France on October 3, 1776. The Mediterranean Sea is very rough during the winter because of the southern winds which blow almost throughout the season. Montigny therefore chose to travel *via* Austria and Turkey and then all along the coast to Alexandria. Unfortunately, it took him exactly five months to reach the Egyptian port. It must be remembered that M. de St. Lubin, charged with a political mission at the Maratha Court, reached India in a record time of four months and twenty-three days. Since Montigny was entrusted with an identical mission at the Court of Delhi, he had perforce to choose another route, not to arouse the suspicions of the English. When Montigny arrived at Cairo a month later, he found that it was impossible to sail

from the ports of the Red Sea to the Malabar Coast before the end of August, sometimes even the end of September. He therefore employed his time in seeking information about navigation in the Red Sea and about the present situation in the country, including the activities of the English there.

The ship on which he embarked at Suez was captured at Yenbo and all its shipment in wheat was seized. From Yenbo he went to Jidda by a boat. He was detained there for thirteen days. Europeans had to put up with all sorts of vexations on this coast, obviously because they had robbed the Arabs of a very lucrative trade. If Montigny had not been furnished with a letter from the Customs Officer at Cairo, who declared that he was a Frenchman, he could never have left the place. The English were detested there because they went to Suez without paying the customs to the Sheriff of Mecca. Not finding in this port any ship leaving for Mocha, Montigny chartered a boat and even sailing during the night he came to Hodeida. Here he got rid of his big boat and got into a launch, but in spite of all his efforts, he could not reach Mocha before September 25. Alas! the last English boat on which necessity would have forced him to embark had left thirteen days before his arrival.

At Mocha Montigny made a desperate attempt to reach Muscat by chartering a small boat against all advice. As expected, the attempt failed. After struggling in vain for fifteen days continuously against the winds and the currents, he returned to Mocha. He was also in financial difficulties because of the obstacles and delays, and had to borrow money from the French brokers of Mocha. He did not wish to wait for the ships sailing for the Coromandel Coast not before six months or for those leaving for the Malabar Coast only in the beginning of August. Instead, he chartered a boat and left Mocha on February 8, 1778, and arrived at Muscat two months later. As he could not sail direct to Surat, he went to Porbander. He

was seized by the Kolis within sight of Diu and taken to Navi Bander where he was detained for 36 hours. After a very hot argument with their leader, they allowed him to go. He then went to Jafarabad to the camp of the Chief who had great influence on the pirates of this coast. The latter gave him a very good reception and had even the courtesy to offer him his dispatch boat with a Koli captain for his safety. He reached Surat on May 4 in sound health though worn out with fatigue, exactly eighteen months after his departure from Paris. We can easily imagine his exasperation at this inordinate delay in reaching his destination. Fortunately for him, nothing was lost since the French Government's preparations for sending an expedition to India had not yet made any headway.

Montigny left for Delhi on May 23. He was fully aware of the risks he was running at the hands of the English; his men were armed with guns with fixed bayonets which the Consul, M. Anquetil de Briancourt, had lent him. This was again a bad season especially for a European to proceed to Delhi. He intended to stay at this place till the end of the monsoon. He would then return to Surat to go and examine the Gulf of Sind. But from the information he had already obtained, he found that the Minister had been misinformed on the Tatta project.

At Ujjain, where he reached after a month, he learnt that Madec, in concert with whom he was to carry on his negotiations with the Court of Delhi, had left Gohad ten months earlier and proceeded to Pondicherry. Madec's absence did not dishearten Montigny who continued his journey and reached Agra on August 1, after a very arduous journey. Fortunately, here he met a Frenchman, Visage, who was in correspondence with Bellecombe, Governor of Pondicherry. The latter had charged him with negotiating political matters concerning French interests with Najaf Khan, the Emperor's General. From Visage, Montigny learnt that Najaf Khan was the only prince with whom the French should negotiate at the

Court of Delhi, because he had at his disposal the forces and the seals of the Empire.

Through the good offices of Visage, Montigny obtained an audience with Najaf Khan on August 8. He informed the prince that he had been dispatched by the Minister to confer with Madec on the memorandum which he had sent to the Minister and which he (Najaf) was aware of; that he was instructed on behalf of the Minister to disclose that in France they were seeking ways and means to send troops to this country; that having learnt of his (Najaf's) agreements with Bellecombe, he had nothing more to add and that in seeking this interview, his object was to pay him his respects. Najaf replied that he would keep his promise to attack the English if 700 to 800 French troops and 150 to 200 gunners were dispatched to his succour; that he undertook to pay for their salary and their subsistence; that otherwise he would have to keep quiet until the first offensive movement on the part of the English; that as he had 1,50,000 men under his command, he did not fear the English.

While Montigny was in the Emperor's camp at Dig, he received a letter from Bellecombe dated August 13. The French Governor informed him that English ships, which had arrived from Suez, had brought the news that war was to be declared between France and England; that the English were making great preparations of war at Madras and had already collected a body of troops at Conjeevaram and that the Nawab Muhammad Ali had given orders to intercept all provisions intended for Pondicherry. Bellecombe advised Montigny to proceed to Poona immediately, meet some persons indicated by him and persuade them to create a diversion for the English on the side of Bombay.

The Secretary to the French Consulate at Surat, M. Demontcrif, had thoughtlessly boarded at Suez an English ship which was sailing for Bombay. At Bombay the

authorities searched his papers, opened all his packets and especially a letter in ciphers which was addressed to Montigny by the Minister and which created such a stir in Bombay that immediately orders were sent to Surat to seize his person. Harkaras were sent to Delhi to follow his march and the Nawab of Surat was urged to use his influence at Delhi to get him arrested. He was warned against poisoning. The Council of Calcutta made three attempts to obtain his surrender from Najaf Khan, but did not succeed.

Montigny left the Emperor's camp on January 26, 1779. The delay was due to the fact that he was stranded at Delhi for want of funds. On the way, at Barhanpur, Montigny just escaped from the hands of the English brigade, led by Col. Goddard, which was heading for Surat. He reached Hyderabad about the middle of May. He stopped for two months in the camp of Lallée, then in the service of Nizam Ali, waiting in vain for the appearance of a French squadron on the Coromandel Coast. He arrived at Poona on July 31. In addition to the mission of persuading the Maratha leaders to espouse the cause of the French, he had also undertaken to secure employment for Lallée with the Marathas.

At Poona Montigny met M. Warnet, supercargo of the ship le Sartine which had brought M. de St. Lubin to Chaul; he had been left behind by the captain of the ship to look after the cargo deposited at Chaul as a security for the loan of 4,00,000 francs which he had taken from the Maratha bankers at Chaul. Having been at Poona for more than two years, Warnet had an intimate knowledge of the state of affairs at the Maratha Court. Naturally Montigny spoke to him about Lallée's desire to enter the service of the Poona Darbar. Warnet gave him to understand that no agreement could be concluded with the Poona Court for another six to eight weeks. For, the Regency had sent a Waquil to Surat to find out the intentions of the English about the future of Raghoba. If the

English consented to surrender him, the Marathas would conclude peace with them. If, on the other hand, they had to take the field, they would most willingly enlist Lallée's services. Montigny was surprised that the Poona Darbar should be afraid to have an interview with any one who was French; they were so intimidated by the English, he thought. Montigny also found that the Regency was worried about the attitude of Mahadji Shinde. He was the most powerful chief at the Court but was suspected of having a secret understanding with the English. He had purchased all the guns from le Sartine and all his moves tended to increase his power. If he remained faithful to the Regency, the English could not hope to place Raghoba on the throne, but even if he remained neutral, the future of the young prince was in danger, according to Montigny.

Soon Montigny got in touch with Shinde's Waquil and at the latter's advice dispatched a personal letter to his master along with the letters which he had brought from the princes of north India. He had written to him in such a manner as to probe the recesses of his heart, if at all he wanted to unfold it. At the same time, Montigny wondered how Nana Fadnavis allowed Shinde to buy all the guns, 7,000 in number, from the cargo of le Sartine and why he did not accept Lallée's services at the most critical moment. He called it " politics of pusilanimity, avarice, ignorance ". Montigny was unable to grasp the real situation of the Maratha State at this time. The French themselves acknowledged the hostility of the Gaikwad of Baroda and the Bhonsle of Nagpur to the Poona Darbar. All the others, including Tukoji Holkar and Haripant Phadke, were second rate figures. Nana Fadnavis had perforce to placate Mahadji Shinde to save the State. He could not afford to hurt him nor could he take any decision without consulting him. In his effort to get Lallée enlisted in the service of the Marathas, Montigny tried to seek the intervention of Haripant

Phadke who promised to speak to Nana Fadnavis on this subject. In the meantime, Warnet had offered to the head of the artillery, Bhimrao Panse, 150 Europeans and 600 sipahees to operate the guns. But after tossing him about for four months, he was informed that they did not wish to enlist anybody's services at the present moment. It was obvious that they did not want to give the English any pretext for complaint, as they were at that time most anxious to obtain the surrender of Raghoba from the English. There was also a thick rumour in Poona that Col. Goddard was planning to advance on the Maratha capital with two battalions. If the rumour proved true, Montigny's stay in Poona would be very short, for, he would like to hasten to France to obtain immediate succour for the Marathas in French troops. He felt that the French had missed the opportunity to get Lallée enlisted in the service of the Marathas. If Lallée's party had been with them in their last battle with the English, it would have perhaps been in high favour and even could have obtained permanent service with them. Their success over the English, thought Montigny, had inspired in them a sort of confidence which would not turn in favour of the French.

Shinde was very happy to receive the letters which the princes of north India had written in Montigny's favour. In his reply to the Frenchman's letter, he said that he was coming to Poona in 15 to 20 days time when he would be delighted to meet him. At last on 8th and 24th September all, including Shinde, met at the camp of Nana Fadnavis. Montigny explained to Shinde the strength of the forces of which Lallée's party was composed—1,000 topases, 1,500 sipahees, 300 French infantry and 500 native cavalry—and pointed out to him how it could be further expanded. Mahadji appeared to be quite satisfied. With regard to the question of the salary which was expected, he promised to think over it. There was another meeting on the next day, but Shinde could not be present

as he had to accompany his aunt to his jahgir. He had left behind his Waquil who was charged with negotiating this affair with Nana Fadnavis. From the meetings with Shinde, Montigny got the impression that Shinde would remain faithful to the Regency and would gladly attack the English, but that he awaited the landing of the French. Montigny was also convinced that it was Nana Fadnavis who was reluctant to enter into any agreement with the French. In an interview with the Maratha Minister on 28th October, he found out that the Poona Darbar had entered into some agreements with M. de St. Lubin and that Nana Fadnavis was awaiting the result of his demands, and that nothing would make him change his attitude. Finally, both Nana Fadnavis and Haripant Phadke gave a reply to Lallée's letter. The contents were anticipated long back. Montigny would have been happy if the Poona Darbar had found their way to accept Lallée's services, for, in the event of the arrival of the French squadron, Lallée could have played a splendid role in India by increasing the strength of the French forces. He also realised that the Marathas would never make any movement in favour of the French without the arrival of the French forces in India. Having nothing more to do at the Maratha Court, he decided to leave for France. He left for Goa where he arrived towards the end of December 1779. He embarked for Europe on January 16, 1780, on a Portuguese ship which reached Lisbon on August 14. Eight days later he left for Paris through Spain and arrived there on September 23.

It would be interesting to contrast the attitudes of M. de St. Lubin and Montigny who were sent to India on identical missions. In the first place, St. Lubin displayed too much pomp when he landed at Chaul and also when he arrived at the Maratha Court, and advertised his mission to the four corners of India. On the other hand, Montigny arrived at Surat almost unnoticed and left for Delhi equally privately. It was only when the

papers of M. Demontcrif, Secretary to the French Consulate at Surat, who had thoughtlessly or perhaps selfishly boarded at Suez an English ship, were searched at Bombay and when they found among these papers a letter in cipher addressed to M. de Montigny by the French Minister, that the suspicions of the English about his mission were aroused. In the second place, whereas St. Lubin had the presumption to think that he was superior in rank to and completely independent of Bellecombe, the Governor of Pondicherry, Montigny was fully conscious of his duties and showed to Bellecombe full respect due to his rank. He not only confided to him the secret of his mission but also asked for his orders on the course he should follow after reaching Delhi. And accordingly, he agreed to immediately comply with his instructions to proceed to the Court of Poona to induce the Marathas to create a diversion for the English on the side of Bombay. Thirdly, St. Lubin used a ridiculously highflown style in his correspondence with the Minister and Bellecombe, while Montigny's style was simple, courteous and appealing. How we wish the roles of these two Frenchmen were interchanged so that the Marathas would have been saved all the trouble that arose out of the presence of St. Lubin at Poona ! Besides, Montigny would have played a more useful role at the Maratha Court since he was dispatched to Poona later on as French Resident. The only stain on the otherwise unselfish character of Montigny is his jealousy for St. Lubin, a common defect among most Frenchmen in India.

VINAYAK GAJANAN HATALKAR

FRENCH RECORDS

(RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE MARATHAS)

Volume III

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VINAYAK GAJANAN HATALKAR

Jean Law de Lauriston

Governor of Pondicherry

1765 – 1776

C² 118, f. 44-48 v°

Pondicherry, 9th February 1771

My Lord,

I have already had the honour to inform your Excellency about the arrival here of some qualified officers who have been dispatched to me from the Isle of France to serve later on under M. Hügel. Attached herewith is a statement which contains their names, ranks and the salaries they receive every month. As M. Bobé, who is entered in it, died some days ago, I thought I could put in his place, subject to your approval, Captain Deputy de Montgarny's nephew, M. Traon de Montgarny in the capacity of a sub-lieutenant. He is a young man, who has since his arrival served as a volunteer, though he has in his hands an officer's cerrificate. I have every reason to be satisfied with his conduct. I request your Excellency to approve my action in his favour.

M. Hügel may have arrived two months ago at Goa, from where I received from him just a small ordinary letter. I indirectly learnt that he had left the place to proceed to the Court of Haider Ali Khan. He will very certainly have a good reception especially in the present circumstances when this chief is at war with the Marathas. But according to me, the best course for M. Hügel is not only to counsel Haider Ali Khan to make peace even when it should cost him much, but even try to conclude solid friendship with this powerful nation, and to make him understand that his interest lies in turning his weapons against the Europeans who have seized on all sides of India a good portion of the interior and who will soon be in a position to dictate to her (India) herself by the power they acquire from day to day. This Maratha nation is unquestionably the most powerful in India; the only one in which there is a very steady Government and the only one whom the English respect. Sooner or later, Haider Ali Khan must succumb, when pitted against the Marathas. It can be said that the Maratha only calls one finger of his hand into action against two fists of Haider Ali Khan. M. Hügel, even if he had 200 men with him, would not save him. Moreover, even though M. Hügel had a detachment of Europeans, this detachment would be styled as French. Consequently, the Marathas become our enemies. The English, if they had something to fear from this detachment, would

not fail to send a much stronger one in their service. I may in vain proclaim here to the Maratha envoys that M. Hügued is not under my command and that I do not recognize him as French, it is almost understood that without any consideration for my declaration they will revile us; unfortunately, we are not in a position to reply to them.

Besides, I still do not know what the intentions of M. Hügued are, or the instructions which he may have received, but I continue to doubt whether in the present circumstances, he can succeed even in forming a detachment in the service of Haider Ali Khan. This Nawab has been for a long time imploring the English for succour and has been trying as much as he can to please them and put them in his interests, but his penetration does not go far enough to understand their politics which obliges them to placate the Marathas. Haider Ali Khan is taken in by it. He showers presents which the Governor and the Councillors of Madras return only by good promises. If the English perceive that M. Hügued intends to form a detachment of Europeans, they will certainly threaten Haider Ali Khan. The latter then most probably will tell M. Hügued to remain quiet, and that will be the right thing for him (Haider) to do. For, after all what could he do against the English when they are united with the Marathas? It would be different if he were to see us in force in a position to take his side and oppose the English. But that is what we cannot think of. Moreover, supposing that we had forces in such numbers as could be dispatched to us, I dare assure your Excellency that we ought not expect much from a war against the English when they have the Marathas on their side and when we have only Haider Ali Khan to support us. I think that we should not get embroiled with the Marathas; and that is why I began by saying that the best course for M. Hügued would be to induce Haider Ali Khan to patch up his peace by satisfying the Marathas.

I know that the arrival of M. Hügued in India and that of the officers who are here, greatly arouses the curiosity of the English. They are debating and I am sorry to find that they are arguing correctly. Under what name can I disguise officers who have come here, who do not belong to the battalion at all and who have, moreover, been announced for what purpose they are here by a number of private letters from the Isle of France. In order to put a stop to many difficulties, I say in the public that M. Hügued is to return. I remember to have written to your

Excellency that Haider Ali Khan demanded M. Hügucl and that I would be delighted if he were here. I expected that possibly he would appear at Pondicherry as a private individual or as Captain of the battalion. We would have discussed together many things, after which under the pretext of dissatisfaction he would have returned to the Isles to play his part, if we had thought that he could come off with honour and utility for the nation. Moreover, I would not at all be anxious because I believe he is prudent and because I know in addition that M. le Chevalier Desroches[1] would have given him instructions in keeping with the details I have given him about our situation.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and obedient servant

LAW DE LAURISTON

C² 118, f. 48-48 v°

From M. de Boynes, Minister for the Navy.[2]

Versailles, 24th January 1772

M. Law de Lauriston,

I have read, Sir, with the greatest attention the letters you wrote to M. le Duc de Praslin from 23rd February 1770 to 10th of the same month of the following year, and I am going to reply separately on each article. This order is absolutely necessary in a large correspondence which embraces a multitude of different subjects and I think it very advisable that you should follow it.

The first subject to which I ought to pay my attention is the political situation of the powers in India. You have rendered an account to M. le Duc de Praslin by your letters of 5th March, 15th June and 19th October 1770 and by that of 9th February 1771 of the divisions which continue to subsist between the Marathas and Haider Ali Khan, and pointed out to him that it was difficult for the Nawab to endure the burden of the war against such a powerful nation from which we could derive more succour than from Haider Ali Khan in case of a rupture with the English. The

battle which Haider Ali Khan lost on 7th March of the last year and of which the ship Le Praslin has just brought the details, could justify your conjunctures. However, it is stated that in spite of the necessity to withdraw to Shrirangapatan, he still possesses many resources and M. Hüguel who has sent a detailed account of the battle of 7th March 1771, wrote on 10th April next that at this time a negotiation with Haider Ali Khan had been initiated and that the Marathas appeared to desire a settlement.

Without taking any part in the quarrels which are foreign to us, the attachment which Haider Ali Khan has constantly shown for the (French) nation, requires that we should treat him with consideration.

We cannot feel sure that we shall find the same feelings in the Marathas who, on the contrary, give us the most legitimate reasons for complaints by piracies[3] which they commit on the Malabar Coast. But since you think that we can derive from them very useful succours when the occasion arises, I cannot but approve the conduct you have been following with regard to them, and you may very well avoid giving them any kind of anxiety, as our politics in India is to maintain the best understanding with all the powers of the country and to dispose them to help us at the proper occasion without getting entangled in the private quarrels which they may have amongst themselves.

I have the honour to be etc.

C² 118, f. 252-276 v°

Pondicherry, 13th October 1771

My Lord,

I received the two letters which your Excellency had done me the honour to write to me on 17th March and 6th April of this year.

I have carefully gone through the packet with the flying seal for M. Chevalier which encloses several letters concerning the mission of M. de Braux, so-called envoy of the Nawab Shuja-ud-Daulah. I have recommended him to M. Chevalier since it is the intention of your Excellency, and besides, I am very glad to oblige persons who are interested in M. de Braux. In spite of that, my Lord, I cannot help representing to you that if the first comer who would like to dabble in politics, make projects,

is sure to be as easily listened to; if the first person, who goes to the Court of some Rajah, or Nawab, without being acknowledged by the commandants of the nation, obtains from him some letters, even some presents—which is easy enough with a little intrigue, many good promises and some expenses—if this person, I say, is sure to get a good reception in the offices of our Ministers and get a reward for his troubles, you must be prepared for the greatest confusion in public affairs. I am saying here only what, according to me, your Excellency has rightly felt, since you have brought a remedy to the evil which might result, by addressing the whole to M. Chevalier. I know M. de Braux; he arrived with me from Europe as a writer without any functions on the ship Le Duc de Praslin. Having been strongly recommended to me, I kept him in Bengal, and I confess to you that resolved to render him service, I studied him for more than two years, doing my utmost to find out what he was capable of. And now he has become a negotiator; I would have never suspected it.

As I know partly the grounds of dissatisfaction he gave to M. Chevalier two years ago, which fact he has probably concealed from your Excellency, I did not deem it advisable to give positive orders concerning him to this commandant. I merely pointed out to him how much I would desire that he could forget what happened and arrange things in such a way that he could employ M. Braux according to your intentions. M. Chevalier will surely not fail to explain the whole matter to your Excellency and to complain about the rashness with which a number of idle persons, who have at heart no other goal than their selfish interest and dabble with public affairs. There have been instances of this nature in Bengal, as I have had some on this coast, about which I have several times written to M. le Duc de Praslin. On considering the manner in which affairs are conducted among us, people would be apt to mistake us foı children surrounded by their toys which they move after one another unintentionally without knowing what they are doing. We employ twenty machines which, having no connection among them, or rather having a wrong one, can only produce a bad effect; the one partly destroys what the other had done. That proceeds, I think, from the fact that in France we still do not know India at all which has become so interesting because of this formidable power which we see the English have attained and because of the immense riches which they derive from it. We cannot understand how they maintain themselves; we are worried, we passionately listen

to all those who come from there, but at the same time we notice so many contradictions in what each one utters that we do not know what to believe. That also happens because we havn't great confidence in those who command in India. They have written volumes on everything, entering into greatest details; that was necessary, but at the same time, the result is that we do not read them; or that we only go through them with the scantiest attention, so that we often misconstrue what they say. These commandants say things as they are; harsh, unpleasant truths. We prefer much to talk with a shrewd man, who has his private interests which we do not notice and has only a superficial knowledge, or even very false one, of India; he boldly presents things in a pleasant way and we easily persuade ourselves that he is right, because we are always inclined to believe what we like. Thus are born twenty different projects; we want to make experiments; we suspect that the commandants in India make things appear difficult only to raise their importance.

Affairs are conducted in a much different manner with the English. With them it is a treason, punished with the greatest severity, to have the least correspondence with the native people without being authorized by his commandant. Even a Councillor of Madras would not dare of all things speak or write two words on public affairs without informing the Governor. The machine with them is single, the orders which put it into motion are single, its springs, however multiplied they may be, move in concert; thus it produces the greatest effects.

The Committee established for political affairs being unable to attend to them at the present moment, I am going to give you, my Lord, my ideas on the present situation of affairs as much as the short time before the departure of the private ship, which is being dispatched, will permit me to do so. As Minister charged especially with Indian affairs, your Excellency must have undoubtedly studied all that I wrote several years ago to M. le Duc de Praslin. Without that my ideas would appear unsustained and quite strange, especially when I know that many persons write quite the contrary of what I think.

Haider Ali Khan

This Nawab is considered as a hero in France because of his war against the English in 1769, of which it can be said that the honour remained with

him without a single farthing of profit. To-day he is absolutely crushed by the Maratha power which English politics has drawn on him, so that he dare not stir. M. Hügucl and some French officers are with him. My letters dispatched by Le Massiac and Le Mars to M. le Duc de Praslin of which I have sent some duplicates, and several other earlier ones, sufficiently reveal how little we ought to rely on a powerful succour from this Nawab in case of war. I have expressed my opinion on this point to M. le Chevalier Desroches, but it appears that in Europe and at the Isles, they have quite a different idea of Haidei Ali Khan than mine. What appears to me still more extraordinary is that there they consider the Marathas as simple pirates, they who are the most redoubtable nation in India, who possess half of it and who have the right on the fourth part of the revenues of almost all the other parts.

As for the dispatch of M. Hüguel, it is a mystery which has not been communicated to me at all. It is true that in 68 or 69 I remember that on the occasion of the troubles I wrote to M. le Duc de Praslin that Haider Ali Khan was asking for M. Hüguel and that it would be desirable if he were with him. That must have perhaps induced M. le Duc de Praslin to dispatch him. Indeed in the awkward position in which I am, it is not possible for me, without the greatest risks, to appear as if I am supporting the party which is sought to be established in the service of Haider Ali Khan. M. le Duc de Praslin must not have deemed it advisable to write freely to me on this subject. I have just dispatched to M. Hüguel a packet which was meant for him and which has been delivered to his own men; I hope it will reach him safely. M. Hüguel is a brave officer, but he knows Haider Ali Khan only as a person to whom he is extremely devoted, but who, however, has often played very bad tricks on him. I doubt very much at present if he can do anything with this man. The English will never permit him to rise to that point of greatness which he had once reached.

You suggest to me, my Lord, to pass round, in case of wai, our troops in the armies and in the pay of Haider Ali Khan or some other powerful prince who is an enemy of the English. That could be done absolutely if, being the first to be informed of the war, I had some days to myself, but if the English get the information about it first as it always happens, that becomes quite an impossibility. We are in a territory which is in their dependency, encircled so to say; as soon as they receive the news,

they will march on us and in the condition in which this place is, we cannot think of any resistance.

Persons acquainted with the political situation in India have assured your Excellency that it would be possible to induce Haider Ali Khan to furnish us some succour in money, without interest and even without hope of repayment, to hasten the fortifications of Pondicherry. That is perhaps possible, but this is how:

To espouse the cause of Haider Ali Khan, is to send him at once 400 to 500 Europeans, cannons, guns, munitions of all kinds and in abundance, in short make war for him. He would certainly pay for them or he would maintain, as usual, very badly the troops which would be in his service. and would send me perhaps a lakh to work on the fortifications. But what would be its result? These fortifications would not be more advanced because of it. The Nawab, in whose territory we are, is a sworn enemy of Haider Ali Khan; supported by the English, he could very quickly make us repent for the succours which we would have given to his enemy. To have the least succour from Haider Ali Khan, we must thus begin by making a war.

These persons acquainted with the politics of India, do they maintain that Haider Ali Khan would lend money to us out of pure friendship for us and in the hope of subsequently obtaining essential services from us? They are very much mistaken, if that is their idea. I can assure your Excellency that these persons either have very little knowledge of the character of the native people, or at least do not know our actual situation. To obtain assistance (in money) from the people of the country, we must not appear miserable as we are; we must show them a certain affluence which might stop them from fearing that we shall always be a burden to them, and prove to them at the same time that the advances which they can make will not be lost at all. Words do not count for them; they must see clearly when it is a question of spending money, and especially when it concerns a man, as attached to material things as Haider Ali Khan is, who spends it. It is one of his great defects; it is even the cause of his fall. Now let us cast a glance on ourselves and let us see what are the attractions we can offer. I see that for fifteen or twenty years now we never kept or could keep the promises we gave; I see that all those whose cause we espoused ended unhappily; that we were always

in greatest need of money. I see a veritable bankruptcy in the manner in which we paid a part of our debts, an impossibility to pay what we still owe, a general dissatisfaction among the people of the country, especially since the new decree which has been sent to us and by which the liquidation of their debts is referred to Europe; what they can only conceive to this day, by the idea in which they are, is that we want to totally deprive them of what is due to them. I see that instead of powerful efforts which the people of the country expected from a nation like ours, we have not even done to establish ourselves what the smallest nation in the world would have done in a similar case. From the first year, we have been wanting in money; we are obliged to have recourse to loans; the subsequent years by progression are noteworthy only for more pressing needs, with the result that successively we are indeed today positively reduced to dying of hunger. I even do not know if, to avoid the misfortunes which I foresee, and not finding a single farthing with the private persons, I shall not be obliged to use a means which I can call the height of infamy, that of approaching our inveterate enemies, the Governor and the Council of Madras, to implore them to lend me enough to pay my garrison; perhaps they will laugh at me considering the circumstances; perhaps too their pride being flattered by such a step, they will give me something; they will call it generosity, but it is the generosity of a doctor who would wish that his patient had all the possible diseases to have the pleasure of curing him of them.

In the low, mean, beggarly condition in which we are for such a long time in India, we must know very little the people of the country to expect from them the smallest thing, and especially from Haider Ali Khan. It is more than three years that I have been soliciting him; he was certainly quite in a position to help us at that time; I have not ceased speaking to him since; M. Hüguel, to whom I wrote about it several months ago, has even been busy since this time inducing him to lend us some money; but I know the man; he gives nothing for nothing; if he lends, he needs not only very strong securities so that he is sure to be reimbursed, but also we must pay from the very moment for the pleasure he takes in lending and for the pain which he suffers from it, by furnishing him many things he will ask for and which I cannot give him without exposing myself to the vengeance of the Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan. He is said to be a friend of the French—it is certain that he owes much to M. Hüguel and to all the Frenchmen who were formerly in his service;

but gratitude is a virtue unknown in this country—we shall be wrong in relying on his friendship. He calls himself our friend because we call ourselves his, because we speak to him many bad things about the English and about Muhammad Ali Khan whom he does not like at all, because he feels sure that sooner or later we shall come to a rupture with the English. But this is an ineffective friendship, which will take effect only as much as we shall ourselves be active, and from which I think besides that we shall never derive much advantage. He also calls himself a friend of the English whom he does not like at all, because he needs them. During the secret conferences between him and the English deputies, what vile and horrid things hasn't he said about us and that only because he knew that that could give them a pleasure. He does not like them at all because they are extremely powerful and because they are the real cause of his misfortune. He does not like them at all and in spite of that they had the secret of obtaining from him all they wanted. I am sure that he has given them more than ten lakhs of rupees as presents because he has always been taken in by their politics which he cannot understand. Even today when he is beaten by the enemies which the English have created for him, if the English needed ten lakhs and if they approached him for obtaining them from him as a loan, promising to return them and to be his friends, he would very quickly find the means to satisfy them. He will not even require that they should begin rendering him service. He will still trust their word because he fears them and because he sees them powerful, in a position to act vigorously for or against him. From the letters I receive from France, I see that we have not the least correct idea of the actual situation in India. We listen to sensible persons who have spent fifteen or twenty years in India, we imagine that they cannot but be very well informed. There are perhaps many of these persons who have formerly played there a great role. How can one be mistaken by adopting their ideas; but these persons can opine correctly only on what they saw. At the capture of Pondicherry in 1761, a little before or after, they returned to France and have preserved the same ideas about India which they had. However, what an inconceivable change the revolution has occasioned for these persons, the total ruin of the French nation in India and the aggrandisement of the English nation which no longer found any obstacle to its designs. M. de Bussy himself does not know actual India at all, if he judges about it by the ideas which he had when he quitted it. If he were here only for twenty-four hours, he would

admit it; but there is this thing in his favour, it is that with the knowledge he had about very essential things and which almost does not vary at all or only imperceptibly, M. de Bussy in fifteen days' time will be better acquainted with the facts than any Frenchman in India. These persons assure that there are thousand resources in India; that was true before the capture of Pondicherry when there was a certain equilibrium of power between the European nations; but when you have against you a dominant power which terrifies everyone, which has a definite policy, of which the Indians will always be dupes, because they cannot understand it and because they only know intrigue and see only the present moment: a policy by which this nation succeeds in hoodwinking some to crush the others more easily; because, in fact, the Indian powers, whether Muslim or Hindu, are extremely jealous of one another, detest one another from the bottom of their heart and hundred times prefer to see a foreign nation become powerful than to run to the succour of an Indian power and help it to aggrandise itself. When you have, I say, this European nation set against you, spying with the greatest attention all your movements in order to thwart them, what resources can you have if you are not able to act by yourself ?

A proof, I will be told, that the English do not terrify everyone in India, is the encounter which took place between them and Haider Ali Khan in 1768 and 1769; they were always beaten, forced to retreat as soon as Haider Ali Khan appeared, finally obliged to sue for peace after seeing the Carnatic ravaged; it depended entirely on Haider Ali Khan to crush them and to expel them from the coast, and sooner or later he will succeed in it. That is how one reasons in Paris, perhaps on the information received from Pondicherry, for there are so many persons who take upon themselves to write on things of which they can only have a very superficial knowledge. However, to speak the truth, there are several falsities in this reasoning. I request your Excellency to read all that I wrote to M. le Duc de Praslin on this subject at that time.

You will see in it that if the English did not succeed in their enterprise on the territory of Haider Ali Khan, that is less due to the forces which this Nawab had than to the rashness with which they wanted to pursue their first success, by penetrating an unknown territory distant from their fortified places, without a corps of cavalry sufficient to secure the

communication and prevent the enemy from cutting off their convoys; that that is due to many false moves and above all to the spirit of dissension which had caught hold of them. You will see that, strictly speaking, the English had setbacks but they were not beaten at all, unless it is claimed that an army is beaten because it had some detachments spread in all directions which were beaten or which suffered heavily; on the contrary, they always had an upperhand in general engagements; Haider Ali Khan did not dare to attack them and remained content with turning to account the advantage which his cavalry gave him by harassing them, burning and plundering everything on their way, cutting their convoys. You will see therein that if they could hold their own in the territory of Haider Ali Khan by a corps of Maratha cavalry which they could have had, the English would have withdrawn from it only to obey superior orders from Europe by which their enterprise against Haider Ali Khan was much censured; that obliged consequently to seek means to bring about some reconciliation and unable to agree on a decisive blow which would have at once led to it and spared the reputation of their arms, because Haider Ali Khan was always very careful to remain with his army at a certain distance, so as to avoid meeting the enemy face to face; indeed they had to finally withdraw, make proposals, in short show their weakness, which must have necessarily swelled the courage of Haider Ali Khan, who, informed of the peaceful designs of the English, did not fail to thrust with his cavalry into the Carnatic. You will see in it that the English, although without cavalry, always kept the field making the best efforts to meet Haider Ali Khan who always fled as soon as they appeared and fell back to commit his ravages in another part of the province; that it is thus false that the English fled before him ; that far from seeking them and forcing them to a combat, Haider Ali Khan never even dared to enter the confines of Cuddalore where there were only about hundred Europeans and three or four hundred sipahees, that he dared not fall upon the black town of Madras which still did not have a surrounding wall, where he would have collected an immense booty if he wanted, this town then being absolutely defenceless; that it is therefore the height of falsehood that Haider Ali Khan was in a position to crush the English and expel them out of the coast. You will still see in it that Haider Ali Khan had at the most with him only ten thousand ill-paid cavalry, that he was quite as tired of this war as the English and was ever more impatient than they to reach a settlement because of the troubles with which he was threatened by the

Marathas; that the English who, by forming a chain around the heights of Chingleput, expected to hold back Haider Ali Khan in the part of the south and make the last effort to put him between two fires by the succour which they were trying to obtain from Tanjaour, but unable to prevent Haider Ali Khan from circumventing them and suddenly appearing on the outskirts of Madras, they finally resolved, in order to avoid the ravages with which this part of the province was threatened, to sign a treaty in which I confess that the honour remained with Haider Ali Khan, but from which he did not derive any advantage and which he would certainly never have accepted if he had thought that he could destroy the English and Muhammad Ali Khan; nay more, all the advantage of this treaty remained with the English because of the consequences which it had, the money and the rich presents of every kind which Haider Ali Khan has given them.

By all that has happened in this war, I see that the English are capable of committing the greatest mistakes, but I see at the same time that they know how to retrieve them and that their power had from that time onwards too solid foundations to be shaken by that of Haider Ali Khan who, even in the times of his highest fortune, did not feel that he could take advantage as much as he should have from the mistakes committed by his enemies. Moreover, today things have turned very differently against him and quite in favour of the English. When I said that they terrify everyone, I said nothing but the truth. They are now occupied in making a war with the king of Tanjaour whose capital they are on the verge of capturing. He is the same person who had given some succour to Haider Ali Khan. However, does the latter dare make a movement in his favour ? The Marathas, in their turn, what are they doing? Many persons feel that they have come to an understanding with the English who amuse them by treaties and who, in Bengal, have just abandoned to them in some manner the Emperor Shah Alam with whom a Maratha army is marching, it is said, towards Delhi. But at least the subhedar of the Deccan, Nizam Ali, ought to have acted and tried to take revenge for the insult done to him in 1768. His divans are won over by the English. He is trembling in his seraglio. He prefers burying himself in debauchery to making the slightest effort to recall to duty a province which, thanks to English arms, has eluded his domination and no more recognizes him in anything.

Tanjaour

This little kingdom governed by a Raja, a tributary of the Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan, or rather of the English, has been threatened with war since several years, even before the war of the English with Haider Ali Khan. The Raja had not always been exact in paying his tribute; it was quite a reason for trying to pick up a quarrel with him. But one of the strongest motives originates from the succour which he gave at that time to Haider Ali Khan. It is in vain for him to say that he was forced to do so to save his country from an incursion; this argument is not at all acceptable. He is told that he ought to have taken the side of the Nawab whose tributary he is. Another powerful motive relates to the immense wealth which, it is claimed, he has acquired by a very unjust war he waged against a certain Rani in the country of the Maravas. He is being made to disgorge it, certainly not to restore it to the Rani. But the strongest of all the motives and of which there is no mention at all, has something to do with us. The territory of Tanjaour is like the granary of this coast by its fertility in Neslys or rice. Now the English, in case of a possibility of a war being soon declared between them and us, wanted to secure all the Neslys of Tanjaour, so that, if it was possible, we should not get a grain of it, and for this purpose, intend to capture Naour or Trimelvas where they expect to set up a large establishment. To this motive are added others which have a connection either with the Marathas or Haider Ali Khan, and which will be unfolded only when Tanjaour is subdued.

The King of Tanjaour is a young prince who is not a capable ruler and has very bad advisers. No sooner did he succeed to the throne than his first care was to harass all the old officers who had served his father, of whom some were loved and esteemed in the country; they were ill-treated, put into prison and are still there. In their place he has given his confidence to men who are betraying him, or at least who serve him very badly. To-day he is in the greatest embarrassment since he is besieged in his capital. He is asked to pay fifty lakhs of rupees, two famous pearls which, it is said, he has seized from the Rani of Marava, and the concessions which the English want to have.

From a letter which I received from M. de Boistel, our commandant at Karikal, it would appear that the English would like to urge him to give a promise in writing never to take the side of our nation in case of war.

I can very easily believe it. This prince asked succour from me in gunners, I referred the matter to the decision of the Council which considered that in view of the circumstances, the miserable state to which we are reduced, it was not advisable in any manner to expose ourselves to the resentment of the Nawab and of the English by giving to this Raja succours which certainly could not save him if the English desire to seize his kingdom. I think that if he is ready to consent to give the English the concessions they demand, twenty-five to thirty lakhs for the expenses of the war and to promise not to help us at all in case of war, he will be left alone. He firmly believes that a corps of Marathas will come to his help, but I think that they have come to an understanding with Muhammad Ali Khan.

This king of Tanjaour is again one of those men who see the danger only when they are beset by it and who do not know how to sacrifice some money to put his true friends, those who have interest in forming a friendship with him, in a position to help him when needed. Several times since our re-establishment I have asked him for money, letting him understand that if my place was fortified, I could be, in case of need, of some utility to him; his reply has always been that I should send him men and munitions. A month ago he demanded from me two or three hundred men for which he would pay me on the footing of 25 rupees per month. If I were not afraid of the English and of their Nawab, I would have requested him to receive the garrison since I am not able to pay for it.

The Marathas

They are unquestionably the people most spread out, the best organised and the best governed in India. They are also the only one, known among the European establishments, whom the English respect. Buy throwing a glance over the new English map of Jeffreys, of which I have spoken in some of my letters to M. le Duc de Praslin, you will see therein, my Lord, the extent of the Maratha possessions, but besides, they possess, as in hypothecation, in almost all the other provinces, Muslim or Hindu, especially in the neighbourhood of Delhi, a number of towns with the territories dependent on them as a guarantee for the dues which they claim on all the revenues of India and which they raise to the fourth part. That is known as chauth, a word which has given rise to lot of bloodshed and caused many ravages. The power of these people augments from day to day; they are going to set up an Emperor of their choice at Delhi.

It will perhaps be Shah Alam, this prince in whose service I was formerly, whom they hold today in their hands with the consent of the English of Bengal, for whom this prince began to be a burden. Perhaps they will place another one; but I am quite sure that slowly they will succeed in destroying the empire of the Mussalmans and replace it by that of the Hindus under the Maratha name. It will be a terrible disaster for the Mahomedan religion, nevertheless less surprising than those which it suffers, it is said, today, from the war of the Russians against the Turks; a good matter for reflection for a preacher; for, with this series of unparalleled successes of the English in India, inferences could be drawn, still very wide of the mark, in favour of the Christian religion. It is asserted that the English of Bengal are seriously thinking of an enterprise on Tibet whose golden mines whet their appetite. This country is like a great retreat of Hinduism; from there to China the communication is easy.

The Marathas are a people whose alliance is almost as dangerous as their enmity, because they spare no one to enrich themselves: friend or foe, they treat every one alike; irrespective of the person in whose service they are, they finally ruin him. Therefore the English treat the Marathas with respect less for the good than for the harm which they can do.

Muhammad Ali Khan and the English of Madras

Only the name of the Nawab appears in all the different operations, military or political, which are all conducted by the English from whom he derives his only force. He has found in Mr. Duprè a Governor, very businesslike for the interests of his nation, very active, but who, by the ardour with which he is animated to show off his government, may undertake operations the results of which will not come up to his expectations. What is certain is that in the manner in which things are moving, it is possible that Muhammad Ali Khan detests the English, who hold him as a slave, from the bottom of his heart. He cannot absolutely do anything on his own; his self-respect greatly suffers from it and I have every reason to believe that there is between him and the Marathas some secret treaty of which the English are ignorant and of which the aim would be to succeed in shaking off their yoke. Some overture on this subject has even been made to me by men who enjoy the confidence of the Nawab. The two powers which Muhammad Ali Khan has always considered as

enemies of his families are the king of Tanjaour and Haider Ali Khan because on several occasions these two powers have shown the greatest contempt for him by declaring sufficiently openly that he was a nobody, and always approaching the English Governor. By dint of solicitations and intrigues, and even presents which Muhammad Ali Khan gave, he finally succeeded in inciting the English against them. In the disposition in which Muhammad Ali Khan is supposed to be desirous of shaking off the yoke of the English, it is certain that he had to fear these two powers which the English would have set in motion against him. To-day Haider Ali Khan is crushed by the Marathas and the King of Tanjaour is on the verge of being so by the English themselves. So Muhammad Ali Khan is sufficiently tranquil on that side. If he really wants to shake off the yoke, he has only to call the Marathas, but to be more sure of success, he would have liked that instead of thinking of raising a detachment of troops in the service of Haider Ali Khan, we should have rather chosen to have one with the Marathas and that M. Hügucl should have entered their service rather than getting attached to Haider Ali Khan. This is, my Lord, a thing under a pledge of secrecy. I have spoken about it here only to M. Lagrenèe; it is necessary that you should keep it secret while waiting for the outcome. If we are decided to have a corps of troops in the service of Haider Ali Khan to support his interests, it is clear that we must renounce everything on the side of Muhammad Ali Khan who will then always be our greatest enemy, and who, feeling the necessity to remain under the domination of the English, to whom he really owes his salvation from the times of M. Dupleix and of the last war, as well as all his greatness, however false it may be, will indeed find the means to still further floor Haider Ali Khan in spite of our corps of troops if he wished to raise his head. That is why I wish that M. Hüguel could proceed here under some pretext which it would be easy to find; we would reason together on the actual situation of the affairs. I have written to him on this subject, but he has his ideas, an invincible attachment, for example, for Haider Ali Khan. Moreover, he has orders from the Court of which I know nothing. I quite see from the letters to some persons from here who have come to join him, that he cherishes great hopes. As for me, I do not see any for him, or at least for our nation unless Haider A Khan allied himself with the Marathas, and succeeded in breaking the accord which exists to-day between them and Muhammad Ali Khan, which perhaps is not easy. And even in this case what would be the

positive result for us? There would be a general war of which we would probably be the first victim since Pondicherry is not in a state of defence. Muhammad Ali Khan would not fail to attack us with a large part of the English forces before their flags appear. I would in vain say that I have no hand in the operations of M. Hüguel; being quite persuaded to the contrary, he will always go his way. Whereas, according to my project, our nation being solemnly allied with Muhammad Ali Khan, the revolution would burst only at a moment when the English would least expect it. Whatever it may be, I know that the Marathas would be very happy tc have M. Hüguel in their service; but even if a reconciliation or an alliance with Haider Ali Khan took place, they would always insist that this corps was entirely detached from him.

There is one thing which it is proper to note even now, it is that in spite of the success which we might have in a war in which we are allies of Muhammad Ali Khan, we should not expect that he would ever permit us to have over him the authority which the English have. In fact, it would be going out of one bondage to fall into another. His aim would be to establish things in his territory such as they were before the commencement of the trouble in the times of Dupleix, and to succeed in it he would not expel the English from his territory; he would only be satisfied with forcing them to be there on the same footing as we ourselves would be there. Thereby having in his territory two rival nations between which he would hold the necessary equilibrium and from which he would wish to obtain services when needed against the native princes whom he would have as his enemies. He is confident of making his state really happy and powerful. This is what should be his aim; but to speak the truth I doubt very much if the circumstances would permit its fulfilment. We are quite as restless as the English. When we have the superiority, we would perhaps like to have everything or nothing like the English. Moreover, it would not be good politics to speak thus at this moment. Perhaps this design which I attribute to Muhammad Ali Khan, however reasonable it is fundamentally, would it be reason for thinking that it is much preferable to be allied with Haider Ali Khan, but we would be mistaken. This Nawab is a witness of the bondage of Muhammad Ali Khan, he has much more despotic character, and if ever he is able to raise his head, I do bet that he will take measures to see that no European nation, with which he would be allied, can dictate law to him.

I am very anxious to find out the result of the expedition to Tanjaour, to know what the English and Muhammad Ali Khan would resolve upon. This Nawab still does not know how he stands with regard to us when he sees M. Hüguel with Haider Ali Khan. I continue to maintain him in the idea that I am completely in his interests. Moreover, I must do so indeed, even when that would not be really my way of thinking, since the existence of this colony, in the state in which it is, entirely depends on him. But he is not obliged to take my word for it. He is suspicious, he knows that our nation has always been his enemy. How could he persuade himself that my intention is not to deceive him when he sees the formation of the detachment of M. Hüguel ? I assure you, my Lord, that my embarrassment is extreme. I am without a farthing, precisely lacking everything, with a large colony, 700 to 800 troops in a town open on all sides, situated in a territory which we ought to consider as hostile the moment Muhammad Ali Khan has the slightest suspicion against us, not knowing positively from where to draw our daily subsistence as soon as he wants to stop it. Really I am terrified lest you should hear some unfortunate catastrophe. The neglect in which the authorities have resolved to leave us, on ideas of resources which it is very wrong to imagine we possess, is carried too far.

Before passing to another subject, I must tell you, my Lord, that Rajasaheb, son of the luckless Chandasaheb, whose history you know, is to day with the Marathas who have given him some jahgir for his maintenance. He was previously with Haider Ali Khan, but convinced that there was little chance of fulfilment of the hopes he had founded in that quarter, he left him to put himself under the protection of the Marathas until Providence is willing to do something for him.

The English squadron composed of four war-ships and some small frigates has gone for wintering to the Bay of Trincomalee. Admiral Harland has remained at Madras. Moreover, the English are expecting six of the line in January. It is probable that these naval forces will quit India only when the English are assured that they have no longer to fear anything from those which we may have at the Isle of France. If peace continues, indeed I hardly see what operation the English squadron might undertake in India to compensate for the huge expenses which it costs. M. de Chevalier Lindsay left some days ago for England on the frigate the Stag.

Provinces of the North

Nizam Ali and Bassalat Jang are two brothers of Salabat Jang in whose service was M. de Bussy. Nizam Ali is to-day viceroy of the Deccan, a pompous title which does not prevent him from being extremely hated. He is buried in his seraglio, in the hands of the divans who are well paid by the English.

Bassalat Jang has quarrelled with his brother and separated; he has some provinces as an apanage on the revenues of which he maintains himself. It is in his service that we find the detachment of Zéphir or Babel which by his death is to-day commanded by a man Gardé, called Good Natured. It consists of two to three hundred Europeans almost all French. In case of a declaration of war, and supposing that we get troops capable of holding their own against the English, we can take advantage of this detachment and perhaps of Bassalat Jang; but we must be prepared that if he declares for our party, Nizam Ali will join the other.

To-day everything appears tranquil enough in these provinces of the North and along the coast of Orissa. The princes, Rajas, chiefs, whatever they are, tired of seeing themselves betrayed by their own men and beaten by the English, have finally taken the decision to tolerate the yoke. The English of Masulipatam, a place very well fortified to-day and the approaches of which are very difficult because of the inundations which may form there, dictate law in all this territory which is known as the Four Sarkars.

Bengal

I leave to M. Chevalier to give you, my Lord, the details which concern this part. It appears that the English are quite tranquil there so far as the native people are concerned because they dare not stir, but much disturbed about the forces which they think we have at the Isle and about the designs which they imagine we have formed to surprise them. That is not easy at present since the erection of the two small forts which they have constructed on the two shores of the Ganges almost opposite each other in a spot which is known as Bujbujia.[5] Thereby the passage of the ships which would like to sail up becomes more difficult, and the advantage which one would like to derive from a surprise attack on Calcutta becomes almost impracticable. M. Chevalier says that the

English in Bengal have only 1,500 Europeans and 25 to 30 thousand sipahees counting from Calcutta to Allahabad. I am sure that they have more than 2,000 Europeans. Moreover, I know very positively that besides that, with the help of the bourgeois militia of Calcutta alone, composed of employees, of sailors, and two or three thousand sipahees, they are capable of defending Fort William which is always well stocked. This bourgeois militia forms a corps of 8,000 to 9,000 men who are, I think, better than as many soldiers, being otherwise exercised and disciplined like the soldier himself.

Bengal and the provinces which depend on it are entirely under the domination of the English in the name of the Nawab who does not command there more than what Muhammad Ali Khan does on this coast.

Outside the dependences of Bengal in the north is the Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah who would be very happy to undertake something, but he does not dare. He has been so many times beaten that he has taken the wise decision to remain quiet until an occasion offers itself. There can be no other than that which we ourselves would furnish when we want to appear in force. This Nawab could be useful to us.

The Great Mughal Shah Alam had established his residence near Allahabad. I have already said that he has just left with an army of the Marathas who have given him to understand that they wanted to install him at Delhi, which it is difficult for me to believe. He was in some sort under the domination of the English who, from the revenues of Bengal, furnished him about a dozen lakhs of rupees annually. They consented to let him go with the Marathas. Their best reason, according to me, is that they wanted to remove him further off for fear that somehow or other if war happened to be declared between them and us, we might succeed in enlisting this prince on our side. They know that I was with him for a long time and that he was kind to me. They also know that he has not any reason to be satisfied with them.

Surat, Bombay, Malabar Coast

The English also lay down the law in this part. Surat, the Emperor's town, where we have a factory like the Dutch, is under their domination. Their flag is hoisted on the fort along with that of the Mughal. Nothing

is done there except at their sweet will. However, they havn't big forces there and as all the territory in the neighbourhood of Surat belongs to the Marathas, our alliance with them, if ever it took place, would very quickly make us masters of this place.

From what I hear, the fortifications of Bombay have been completed. I can only refer to what M. Picot, our chief at Mahé, could write to your Excellency on the forces of the English in these parts, as well as on the embarrassment in which he finds himself at Mahé, from which it is no longer possible for me to extricate him, not having even enough to pay my garrison. I shall not be surprised to hear by the first advices that the whole garrison of Mahé has taken the decision to decamp.

General reflections in consequence of the actual state of the French colonies in India.

It appears from all the letters which I have received from Europe that we were on the verge of having a war. If it had taken place, my Lord, I can assure you that generally all our colonies would have fallen into the hands of the English at the latest ten days after the advices had reached them. It is said that we had at the Isles very large forces. Even if they were capable of seizing the whole of India and expelling the English, we would have been nevertheless lost, for it is very certain that our fate would have been sealed before these forces could have arrived here. Moreover, we ought to consider ourselves in this part as individuals whose misfortune is not likely at all to affect the general welfare. It is a sacrifice which we would have made for the mother country.

To tell you what success would have been achieved by the forces at the Isles, which would have been dispatched to India, is what would be too audacious for me to say in a positive manner. I know nothing about these forces; I do not know who was to command them. I only know that by landing here or in Bengal, it would have been necessary for them to fight almost as soon as they had disembarked, that if we relied on the succour of Haider Ali Khan, we were much mistaken. I know that not having either boats or pilots of the Ganges, we would have taken a great risk by making a venture on that side. The only good spot to land on this coast would have been Tanjaour, but God knows if we would have even found a single boat because of the precautions which the English would have taken unless we had approached the

Dutch who probably would have helped us very badly as usual. Once landed in Tanjaour, this prince would have, I suppose, joined our side, but without giving us money. His territory would have become the theatre of war, because the English would have assembled there all their forces from the coast with a body of Maratha troops which they would have certainly had in their service[6]. I cannot say how we would have fared against about 3,000 Europeans, fifteen thousand good sipahees and ten to twelve thousand, perhaps twenty thousand Maratha cavalry[6]. That would have depended on the forces which we would have had and on the manner in which they would have been led. Tanjaour would have furnished only four to five thousand very good cavalry men, and perhaps eight to ten thousand sipahees which together would not have been as good as a thousand of those of the English.

If our forces had appeared in the North, they would have probably caused a revolution. All the Rajas of the Orissa Coast would have raised their head. Nizam Ali and Bassalat Jang would have sought our alliance; of course, we would have had to prefer one of the two. We could have always formed a detachment with which we would have undoubtedly undertaken the siege of Masulipatam, which, though sufficiently well fortified, would have probably fallen in our hands, unless one of the two brothers, who are enemies of each other, and whom an English detachment would have joined, had undertaken to stop our progress. Things would have then dragged on. During this time the English forces assembled from all sides, as many from Bengal as from this coast, would have appeared; it would have been necessary to come to a decisive battle, that is to say we would have had to wait and see in favour of whom fortune would have decided itself.

If, instead of appearing on this side of the peninsula, our forces had been at once at Bombay, I think that it would have been one of the best blows which they could have struck. They would have seized this port, a thing very important for us who havn't got any in the whole of India and to whom the access to the Ganges is closed in case of war. Since the whole territory on this side belongs to the Marathas, the general of our army would have taken advantage of the neighbourhood of Poona to initiate some good deal with the chief of the Marathas who resides there; he could have formed with them, if he had wished, an alliance which could upset the whole of India and could have done

lot of harm to our enemies. I do not know really what could be the result of all that at the peace. I shall only say that that would depend much on the results, good or bad, of the war in other parts of the world, and that as for this one, 6,000 leagues away from the centre of the forces of the two beligerent nations, it is certain that that one of the two which had mastery of the sea, would have finally had the advantage on land.

We are, I assure you, my Lord, very happy at the fact that war did not take place, and very much desire to remain at peace, not that we did not feel the necessity to come to it sooner or later to check this grossly excessive power of the English by which we are overwhelmed, but solely because we still prefer to suffer as we are to being absolutely ruined without hope of rising again; because we see very clearly that in the actual state of India in general, that of the English in particular, it is not possible for us to wage war successfully. Such is the way of thinking, I believe, of all the persons who could be called established in this colony. I do not speak of a number of young men who have nothing to lose, who, suffering from the mediocre state in which they are, have their only hope in a change whatever it be. War, this scourge of families, can alone procure them some advantage; the only evil for them is to perish in it but then all is settled; there are no consequences of misfortune for them as for the families.

I sent by Le Massiac in October 1770, then by Le Mars in April last to M. Le Duc de Praslin some reflexions, suggested to me by the changes that have occurred on the subject of our Company and especially by the uncertainty in which the authorities in France appeared to be, according to me, on the decision it was advisable to take. These letters being addressed to the Minister for the Navy must have been delivered to your Excellency. Perhaps they are im some respects contrary to the ideas you may have, but they are the ideas of a man who can judge only by what he sees here, and who can only make conjectures often wrong on what t he authorities think at a distance of 6,000 leagues.

We have all seen here with the greatest satisfaction the desire your Excellency has to re-establish the Company; in fact, it is the best system of a stable government for the colonies of India. If your design, my Lord, is to re-establish the Company such as it was formerly, that is to say, it has

to support the expenses of the Government, we must then do one of the two things, either the King is kind enough to give every year fifteen thousand to the Company to pay these expenses, or by negotiations with the Court and the Company of England, our Company must be able to obtain concessions in India, capable of covering these expenses from their revenues. Otherwise, whatever efforts it might make to maintain itself by commerce, I am absolutely sure that it will not succeed; the actual situation in India will never permit it. In order to re-establish things such as they were in the times of M. Lenoir, of M. Dumas, of the first years of M. Dupleix, I do not speak at all of the false lustre of his last years and of those of M. Deleyrit[7] when there was nothing but confusion and troubles which entailed expenses beyond the earnings derived from the concessions which we had, however great they were, I am speaking of a time when we did not possess more territory than we have it today, but when goods of India were better, cheaper; when those of Europe were sold better, the expenses were much less, when, in short, commerce was carried on tranquilly without fear of opposition and violence. In order that such times should return, there must be a revolution in India, a revolution as happy for us as the last one was adverse to us. Without that, we can have no hope. I have given many reasons for it in all my previous letters, and especially that of 13th June 1770. The English are masters of India today, the Nawabs are only figure-heads. The Muslim Government either here or in Bengal is entirely conducted according to the decisions taken in the Councils of Madras and of Calcutta. At the time when the Muslim Government was free, I admit it, we were sometimes embarrassed in our commerce, but at least we knew whom to approach. The Nawab, who embarrassed us, was himself interested in not keeping us on tenter-hooks in view of the welfare of his territory, it cost us some presents and everything returned to normal. Today the chiefs, the zamindars, although spread in the province in the name of the Nawab, are appointed by the English. The Nawab gives them orders; but they get secret ones given by the English which they are obliged to comply with in preference, and you can well imagine, my Lord, we are to a large extent the target of these secret orders dictated by hatred and jealousy. If we lodge complaints with the Nawab, he knows well what the matter is; he informs us secretly with a pitiable look that he is very sorry for all that is happening, but that the English oppose his good will. If we approach the English Government and if it has no solid reasons to give, it replies that

it is the Nawab who is master of the territory and that they are themselves subject to his orders. On many occasions when they think they have no reason to mince words, they assume the haughty tone, especially in Bengal, and indeed give us to understand that they are the masters themselves and that we must submit to their will. Because of that all the time passes in disputes and the course of our business is stopped. How can the commerce of a Company succeed so long as things stand on this footing ?

As a matter of fact, it will be absolutely the same thing, even if we had here guaranteed concessions or even if the King were kind enough to help the Company with a fixed sum for its expenses in India. Its commerce will always be extremely obstructed. But since it is a question of re-establishing this Company, it must at least find the only means by which it could be expected to support itself in spite of the vexations of the English Government.

In my letter of October 18, 1770, I have referred to the question of establishing a Company with an exclusive privilege by leaving in India a Royal Government. I even think I have given the preference to this idea considering the circumstances which are the same today. In fact, whether the King bears the expenses of the Government under his name or whether he gives to the Company enough to bear them, it is very nearly the same thing for it, provided the Governors for the King who will be in India should really be attached to this Company and disposed by inclination to favour its interests to the best of their ability. This can go on, at least for some time, for, I confess that in the long run it cannot go on. Experience has proved the contrary sufficiently enough. What would decide me, in preference, in favour of the Royal Government is the idea that in some manner or the other they were trying to create a revolution in the English Government of India without which, you will agree, my Lord, that it is not possible for us to establish ourselves there on an advantageous footing. Now there was nothing more appropriate, according to me, for preparing this revolution than to have in our establishments a Royal Government, because it is certain that the Ministry of England would like to imitate us. Indeed it is with the greatest jealousy that it views so many kingdoms and provinces, which together form more than double the size of Great Britain, at the disposal of a Company. The privilege of this Company is to be extended in some years. If at this epoch the French

Royal Government is established, the odds are that the English Royal Government will also be established. If, on the contrary, the French Company is charged with the Government, there is every indication that the privilege of the English Company will be renewed. Things will then remain as they are for the English, that is to say, in the best possible condition for them and worst for us, because it is certain that we will always have much more to suffer from the Government of a Company interested in a commerce which hangs on the same objects as ours, which is accustomed to enter into the greatest details, which will know how to profit by the smallest occasions in order to make us feel the effects of its jealousy, than from a Royal Government which looks at commerce broadly, as a national object and in which it has itself no special interest. From one Royal Government to another Royal Government things pass off much more nobly and with less vexations than from one Company to another Company. Moreover, this change alone could very well occasion others which would be favourable to us to establish a little less inequality between the two nations in India. It is certain that we shall obtain much more easily from a Royal Government than from a Company a consent for the concessions which we would like to have; this affair might even at present be settled without much difficulty in Europe from one Court to another if there was no English Company of which I consider the opposition as insurmountable.

If the English Company succeeds in getting its privilege renewed, there is no longer any other resource left for us than war, but it appears that we do not want it; at least it is sufficiently clear that since the re-establishment, the authorities have done nothing which might lead us to hope that we cant make it successfully in India. You point out to me, my Lord, that the continuation of peace seems to be assured by the convention between the Courts of London and Madrid, but the English have taught us to fear war even when it was the least apparent.

If war is already declared or is on the point of being declared, I have nothing to say because I consider our establishments as lost.

If we have three or four years of peace before us, as much is necessary to prepare ourselves well, provided there is the will. In this case, the first thing of which we must think in preference to everything else, is to fortify this place, to stock it in such a manner that during the first year of war, it can maintain itself without being obliged to draw its subsistence

from the province in which it is situated, in order not to be embarrassed at all in the choice of the party which we would have to make vis-a-vis the powers of the country.

The authorities must necessarily dispatch funds devoted only to different works which would have to be undertaken and to the stocks, because we lack everything. We have neither barracks for the soldiers nor stores for the provisions nor powder-magazines. These objects would require seven hundred thousand francs each year for the first two years and something more every year for the last two.

As it is not possible to do anything here without money in cash, the item which we always lack, I would be of the opinion, to reduce the expense, to keep here in troops, for the first four years of peace, only the corps of artillery of the colony which may come to two hundred men, hundred men of the battalion and more or less of sipahees according as our funds would permit it, and send the rest of Europeans and three-fourths of the invalids to the Isle of France; at least we can live without money. But from the commencement of the fourth year, according to the news which we would receive from Europe, I would like that the corps of sipahees was raised up to two thousand if there was likelihood of an impending war. It would also be necessary, to be more sure of success, to construct a sufficiently big fortress at Karikal which would only contain barracks and stores in which we could assemble grains, supplies of all kinds which would be taken, when needed, to Pondicherry and would serve our squadrons. This would come to fifteen hundred thousand francs.

If what I have just said on the subject of the fortifications and the stocks of Pondicherry cannot be done, we must give up the idea of making war in India with the least success. It is even quite useless to work on the fortifications if we want only to work on them slowly, because that will be so much lost if we have war in four years. It would be better than not to make any expenses at all, take advantage of the three years of peace to carry on commerce, and in the fourth evacuate the place and proceed to the Isles with the effects which belong to the Company. But what would become of so many families who have established here ? Indeed we ought to leave them at the mercy of the English with a commandant who would be appointed and two or three hundred sipahees. A shocking

resolution which I envisage and for ever dishonourable for the nation. I indeed hope, my Lord, that by the prudence and nobleness of your views on India, it will never take place.

26th October 1771

It appears that the English have no desire to capture Tanjaour, that they have even an understanding with the Raja who prefers to treat with them rather than with the Nawab, and who is inclined to do without him, because the English would demand (concessions) for themselves. I know from sure information that in spite of the solicitations of the Nawab to push on the siege vigorously, everything is dragging on, even the cannon is fired without the balls. So it is always the same English politics which dominates. It is in their interest to bring home from time to time their authority to the different small powers who are in the neighbourhood of the Carnatic to obtain from them money and concessions which suit them, but not to destroy them. The more little powers are divided, the more they (the English) will be masters. Moreover, if all these territories were united under the authority of Muhammad Ali Khan, the English could find themselves suddenly reduced to their Europeans alone at the arrival of our forces, because I am almost certain that Muhammad Ali Khan would join us and by giving orders everywhere which would then be executed, he would stop the course of the revenues which alone procure to the English the means to support this number of sipahees as well as the cavalry which they maintain. Whereas there being other powers in the neighbourhood which are enemies of Muhammad Ali Khan, the English have reason to feel sure that they would either hold him in respect at the arrival of our forces or that they would be supported by other powers. That is also the real reason for which, according to me, they will be opposed to the idea that Haider Ali Khan was completely ruined or at least if, because of the detachment which M. Hüguel wishes to form, they think it is not necessary to placate him, they will try to give Mysore to some one who will be attached to them and who will constitute a power independent either of the Marathas or of Muhammad Ali Khan.[8] This political system is very contrary to the execution of the ideas which I ascribe to Muhammad Ali Khan. In spite of that he could succeed in it if the Marathas were resolved upon it. But they have today many very serious affairs on hand in the North on the side of Delhi which will necessarily delay the execution of the projects which they could have in these quarters.

The Raja of Tanjaour has his deputies at Madras who are working for a settlement; we are thus going to see the English established either at Naour or at Trimelvas, perhaps in both the places.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

LAW DE LAURISTON

C[2] 123, f. 30-32 v°

(30)

General Affairs: Pondicherry, 19th March 1772

Monseigneur Terray
Minister for the Navy[9]

My Lord,

This letter will reach you *via* the Isle of France where we are dispatching the corvette Penelope to transmit some news, spread on this Coast, as well as to procure for this colony the means to sell the goods contracted for the voyage of Mocha which did not materialize, and the disposal of which is possible nowhere else except at the Isles.

Herewith are enclosed the duplicates of my letters of 23rd and 24th February with the second copies of the resolutions concerning the proposals of the Marathas and of the sipahees; a secret resolution on the subject of a request presented to me by one Nellapodear, this chief of the Palegars about whom I spoke in my letter of 24th October 1771 to Your Excellency. This is an occasion which I wished to avail of to get some money in our extreme misery. My labours have been so far unrewarded; this affair is not yet over.

On the 20th of the last month the English of Madras received, by way of the caravan, packets from Europe of 16th September 1771 along with the Gazettes. Almost on the same day we received a packet from Mahé with a letter from M. Picot in which he writes that some officers

of an English ship had an occasion to speak to a Frenchman who happened to be at Mangalore, that they had assured him that the Gentlemen of Bombay had received news from Europe which announced that war was inevitable.

As soon as the packets reached Madras, the first piece of news spread was that peace continued between the powers of Europe with the exception of this war between the Turks and the Russians. But soon I learnt that many reports were spread mysteriously which appeared to announce a rupture in the near future. All that I could gather as more reliable so far is that the ambassadors of France and England had simultaneously left the Courts to which they were accredited and returned home, it is not known why, and that a small ship called Lapwing would leave (England) immediately with the first important piece of news. On that report each one at Madras is guessing in his own way. Some think that war has already been declared, others that this recall of ambassadors does not point out to anything very definite against peace.

Whatever it may be, it is certain that a quantity of munitions has been loaded on warships in front of Madras, under the pretext of a secret expedition which, some people believe, is destined for the Andamans. It appears to me more probable that this squadron is keeping itself in readiness to march as soon as the Lapwing arrives, and that it will go on a cruise round Ceylon. Thus our fate here depends entirely on the orders which will be brought by this ship. If there is war, the enemy will pounce upon us before we can receive the slightest warning, and in the state in which this colony is, it will not even do us the honour of firing a gun-shot. Our only hope lies in the delay in the arrival of the Lapwing, which fact seems to give reason to believe that the rupture was not as imminent as it was thought.

If we could be informed in time, there would be perhaps some means of saving the best part of this garrison by sending it either to the King of Tanjaour or to the Maratha camp which is located in Mysore. For, so far as Haider Ali Khan is concerned, it can hardly be thought of. This chief continues to be shut up in Srirangpattan, unable to keep the field. What possibility is there to reach him with a detachment? But besides, that would be forcing the whole Maratha nation to declare

itself against us and throwing it on the side of the English. M. Hügel, from what it appears to me, is dragging a very listless life which I attribute largely to his worries, because the affairs of Haider Ali Khan are in such a bad way, which makes it absolutely impossible for him to fulfil the goal which he had in mind at the time of his departure from France. He has already had several relapses from a very serious ailment from which he has not yet recovered. I am afraid he will succumb to his disease. It appears that the climate of that part of the country is not healthy. He has just sent me one of his officers by name Bouthenot who is very much broken down.

I had already the honour to inform your Excellency about the return of M. Desclaison to France by the ship le Bertin. He is an officer of distinguished merit whom I esteem very much. But while doing him all the justice he deserves, I cannot help pointing out to you that M. Desclaison, grieved at the unfortunate circumstances, had developed an alarming mental restlessness which is revealed in all his representations to the Council, a copy of which has been sent to the administration. As myself, as well as the Council, differed from him on certain matters, and as several of his letters, a little too indiscreet, obliged me to point out to him that we were not responsible for events from which we ourselves were suffering, M. Desclaison, as a result of that, might have lodged some complaints in Europe about the antagonism he met with in the Supreme Council. I enclose herewith the copy of several letters which I had to write to him. Your Excellency will kindly read through it; it would enable you to judge if the complaints of M. Desclaison are well founded.

We have recently received a letter from the Regency of Batavia informing us that it has decided to prohibit the foreigners from doing trade in Batavia in articles in which the Dutch Company itself is doing business. I am dispatching to your Excellency the copy of the translation of this letter which has been rendered into French by le Greffin of Negapatam, for, because of the absence of our Dutch interpreter, we could not translate it here. It is quite possible that this letter was not exactly rendered into our language. What leads me to believe it is the article forbidding the foreign ships to come to Batavia for repairs. There is nothing surprising that the Regency of Batavia should forbid the foreigners the trade in its establishments. But it appears to me against

the law of nations to refuse the necessary services to a ship which may need them. We have not yet replied to Batavia. We expect to make representations to the Regency, if its intention has really been what the translation says.

Your Excellency must have certainly taken cognizance of a deliberation of the Council of 30th November on the subject of a loan of 3,000 Portnovo pagodas, which has been given to me on very harsh conditions; I immediately paid the money into the Treasury. Such is the trying extremity to which we are reduced and the harsh necessity in which we are that we have to enter into engagements onerous to the State to avoid the catastrophes which would forever dishonour the nation, and to which we are exposed by the neglect of our establishments in India. Your Excellency will surely do me and the Council the justice to believe that it is with the greatest regret that we submit to the demands of circumstances. In the situation in which we are today, we still consider ourselves happy to find resources at such a price. I take the liberty, my Lord, to place before you the fatal consequences which it is bound to have.

I am most respectfully
My Lord
Your very humble and very obedient servant
LAW DE LAURISTON

C[2] 123, f. 33-48 v°

Political Affairs Pondicherry, 23rd April 1772

(Duplicate)

Monseigneur Terray,

Controller-General for Finance.

My Lord,

As I do not receive any news either from France or the Isles, I cannot but be deceived by the reports which the English take pleasure in spreading from time to time. The Lapwing, the ship for which the Gentlemen of

Madras had been waiting so impatiently, has at last arrived. Our fate was supposed to depend on the dispatches which it brought. They still announce, from what is reported to me, perfect tranquillity, and no semblance of rupture. But it so happens that this ship left England on 3rd September 1771 and the Gentlemen of Madras had received much before the arrival of the Lapwing mails which had arrived *via* the caravan dated 20th and 25th September. As it is precisely on receipt of these letters that the reports of an impending rupture were spread, it was natural that I should still feel very uncertain. However, in four or five days' time, I hope to know positively how I stand and whether it is true that since the arrival of the Lapwing the English have received *via* the caravan letters of the end of October which confirm the news that perfect tranquillity has been restored.

The Lapwing stayed only for thirty-six hours at Madras. It left for Bengal where, the report goes, it is to deliver most important letters. Perhaps they relate only to the affairs of the Company, but the importance given to them gives rise to many conjectures. Some declare that as the exclusive privilege of the English Company is about to expire, there is a plan to establish a Royal Government and begin with Bengal; it is not yet decided, they say, but dispatches of the Lapwing apparently contain orders to keep in readiness as a measure of precaution; there is a report that the Gentlemen of Madras have also received on this question letters which intrigue them very much. Others go further with respect to the letters which the Lapwing is taking to Bengal and bring our nation as well as Spain into the picture. Our plan is, they say, to allow Spain to begin the war against England; consequently, Spain, previous to the declaration, is to dispatch to Bengal several frigates laden with regular troops; in the beginning, we shall not appear at all in this affair, but soon we are to join the Spaniards as auxiliaries; thereby, as there will not be any declaration of war between us and England, we hope that the English would indeed leave our establishments undisturbed; to offset this the counter-project of the English is that the Nawabs of this Coast and of Bengal, who are their creatures, would try to pick a quarrel with us in their own names, and expel us from their country; the English, if necessary, would join them as auxiliaries; thereby the English feel quite sure that our plan to help the Spaniards more effectively while saving our establishments will not succeed. As a matter of fact, I got all this report, my Lord, only from some

Malabarees of this town who have correspondence with Madras. But according to me, it is quite possible that the idea started in the beginning from some head of a European. Besides, I believe that there is nothing of the kind in the letters brought by the Lapwing and all this talk is due only to the political musings the English secretly indulge in among themselves; their Malabaree servants pick them up and considering them as definite plans are in the greatest hurry to spread them in all directions. Moreover, supposing that there had been on our part and on that of the Spaniards some similar projects, it is certain that in order to render it ineffective, the English could not have conceived anything better than their counter-projects. There is no doubt that they would have put them into execution and obtained from them the desired results.

If the idea, with which the politicians of Madras credit us and the Spaniards, had any reality, it could only be due to the little attention paid to the contents of the letters and memorandums which we sent and to a kind of obstinacy displayed in France to believe rather what the English say than what we write. The game of the English is to become absolute masters in India without giving such an impression in Europe, lest it might alarm the different powers who could view with very jealous eyes this enormous power which they have been usurping for the last fourteen to fifteen years, these vast possessions which they have acquired or rather these kingdoms which they govern with much greater authority than that with which England is governed by her own King. In Europe, the English, when India is concerned, display in their talks and in their proceedings with foreign ministers as much modesty as they show haughtiness towards us in India. " We are, " they tell them, " in the service of the Nawabs; it is indeed we who support them against their enemies, but they are the masters and we are, like all other European nations, forced to submit to their arbitrary orders. They have their Darbars for the conduct of affairs, over which we have no control; they have their armies with which they often execute projects which we do not approve; we have to put up with their whims. "

Write as we may to the contrary, unfortunately, the authorities in France rather believe the English, because, sure enough, they cannot understand that with 3,000 Europeans which they (the English) may have in Bengal and the identical number along this Coast, they are in a position to dictate law, and that they (the authorities in France) refuse to consider

this large number of disciplined sipahees who form this Indian militia, with which they undertake their military expeditions quite as well as with the Europeans. From the modest tone of the English Ministers, from their manner of describing their situation in India in Europe, an impression might surely be formed in France that these Nawabs, whom we ourselves have so many times represented as having become desperate of their state of dependence on the English, seeing the war declared between Spain and England, could not fail to join us for the common cause. I vouchsafe they would be very much inclined to take this decision and that they would take it without hesitation if they found therein some surety for themselves. May be even reckoning things in India on the principle of government as it is understood in Europe, could it be imagined that all the sipahees in the service of the English, being subjects of the Nawabs, would necessarily abandon them and that they (the English) would be reduced to their Europeans alone ? Thus, supposing that the project, which the English politicians credit us with, had after all some reality, it might be possible to believe that in France and in Spain it had not occurred to them that the English could render it ineffective by inciting the Nawabs against us. However, it is quite true that they can do it and that they will instigate them unless everything is arranged in advance in such a manner as to explain to these Nawabs that they can, without fear of damaging their own interests, refuse to comply with the demands of the English.

The Court of London may say whatever it likes to refute the idea that may be formed of the greatness and of the power of the English in India, I assure you, my Lord, that all that is only a political strategy on its part. It is not the English who are in the service of the Nawabs, but indeed the Nawabs who are in the service of the English. These Nawabs owe their existence solely to the English who absolutely do not want them to attain a position which will enable them to discard their (of the English) authority; they have become Nawabs entirely due to the English, and if they ventured to give rise to the slightest suspicions of discontent, what the English would call ingratitude, they are sure to be soon deposed and confined for the rest of their life. The Nawabs are no more masters in the Darbars than *Sancho Panza was at his table in his government of Barataria.* The Chief Diwan and all the subordinate Diwans are hired by the English and are entirely devoted to them. If the Nawab brings up for consideration

any project, if he wishes to give some order which his Divans could suspect would not please the English, they would very politely point out to him the necessity to consult them (the English). It would be quite unavailing for them to insist, because they have indeed no means to put it into execution; the number of cavalry and sipahees which they have in their service is not so considerble; it may even be said that they are not at their orders, for the chief officers who are at their head are either English by nationality or natives who have given to this nation proofs of their attachment.

It is also very certain that according to the maxims of government established in India, there is no sipahee who is bound, as a subject, to serve the Nawab against the English. Love for the mother country or treachery against the mother country or against the Nawab is unknown here, unless it is in the person of a chief who, being in the very service of the Nawab, abandoned him and without giving him previous warning, took up service with his enemy; every person who is not engaged in the service of the Nawab and who does not receive his salary from him or, as it is said in the country, who does not eat his salt, is free to serve whomsoever he wants, even against the Nawab and even against the Prince or the Mughal Emperor. There is, however, this difference so far as the Prince is concerned, that this liberty of which I speak is not permissible and cannot be justified except by anarchy reigning in the whole Mughal Empire. But as for the Nawabs, they are, after all, only governors or viceroys; they are themselves subjects; none of the inhabitants of the provinces they govern is truly theirs; as a matter of fact, they ought to act, only in the name of the Emperor, and the people of India have had so often occasion to see the Subhedars, the Nawabs, fighting against each other, each one using the name of the Emperor, that a sipahee can, without fearing the slightest reproach, take up such service as he deems it proper. That being the case, one cannot expect that the sipahees, well paid, well dressed and armed in the service of the English, will quit them under the pretext that the Nawab is their master. The English are foreigners, it is true, but for the last fifteen or twenty years, have they not given to understand on several occasions that they themselves act in the name of the Mughal Emperor; during the last four or five years, have they not obtained, all the firmans or patents they wanted, from the Emperor, as a result of which the Nawabs are supposed to be under their domination,

since they are charged, in the capacity of a Divan of the Emperor, with the collection of all the revenues and with their disposition?

You will indeed realize, my Lord, that the English, holding in their hands the two main strings which conduct the political machine, namely money and troops, will force the Nawab to do as they like. Thus, if there were some truth in the project in question and with which we as well as the Spaniards are credited, there is no doubt that the Nawabs, willy nilly would be forced to attack our establishments. In whatever bad condition they are, we can still perhaps survive, if we had to deal only with the natives such as they ordinarily are in the Muslim armies, but without any English flag appearing, we shall be attacked by a part of their European troops and all their sipahees supposed to be solely in the service of the Nawab; in that case, it will be impossible for us to hold our own. The only means to restrain the Nawabs or rather to enable them to follow their bent, which, I truly believe, is to oblige us rather than harm us, would be, in the first place, to persuade them that far from being their enemies, our only desire is to have restored to them the authority which they ought to possess and which the English have usurped; in the second place, to show them that we are ourselves in a position to defend ourselves, if we are attacked, and take vengeance for the wrong done to us. To achieve this objective, this place must at least be fortified and well furnished with provisions and it must have a garrison capable of defending it.

In Bengal, as we are forbidden by the treaty of peace from raising any fortifications, Chandernagore and the places depending on it, will always be at the mercy of the English, unless by some secret negotiation with the Nawab of the place and Shuja-ud-daulah, Nawab of Lukhnow, we succeeded in persuading them to support each other against the English if the latter tried to force the Nawab of Bengal to expel us from his territory. It would, moreover, be advisable to place ourselves in some manner under the protection of the Marathas through letters which we should try to secure from the leading Chiefs, addressed to the Nawab of Bengal, which should be preserved with us and delivered only if there was any fear of some movement on his part; these letters would declare that the French nation being a friend of that of the Marathas, the latter would take a great offence at all the wrongs that would be done to the French and avenge them. Such letters could restrain the Nawab and furnish him a ground to reply to the English. But these letters must

be obtained very secretly so that the English should come to know of them only at the time of turning them to account; but unfortunately, I hardly see any possibility of that because of the little secrecy with which all the affairs are discussed among the natives. Whatever it may be, I am writing about it to M. Chevalier. I am seeking some means to procure similar letters for this Coast, but the trustworthy person, whom I employ at the camp of the Marathas, has been absent for a long time; I have not yet been able to find another whom I can trust.

As for Mahé, it would probably be the Nair of Cartenate (Kadattanad) whom the English would instigate to march against us. If Haider Ali Khan were in a position to help us, we could avail of his services, but failing him, we must again address ourselves to the Marathas to keep in check this petty king of the Malabar Coast.

Besides, this protection of the Marathas, supposing we could obtain it and it had some effect on the safety of our establishments, which is not quite certain, can never be but momentary; the English would very quickly find the means to win them to their side, if they (the Marathas) see us devoid of forces and incapable of being of some utility to them. Thus, we must always come to the point of putting ourselves in a respectable position and the best thing would be to begin by that. The essential thing, as I have already said, is to fortify this place. So long as it will be what it is, the people of the country will not have the slightest confidence in us. We must also have a small fortress at Karikal where it would be easier to accumulate provisions than here; that would be of immense help to the squadron.

I am wasting too much time, you will say, my Lord, on a project about which perhaps there never had been any thought. Indeed, I have heard it only from some Malabarees and I ought to consider it as completely without foundation, but my excuse is that I am kept in ignorance about the happenings in Europe, whereas I find that the English continuously receive news about which they spread such reports as they judge it fit, true or false, which can only disturb me. This very moment when I am writing to you, I know that an alarm has spread among the native people of this town about reports which are in circulation at Madras and more still about some movements of the English troops and of those of the Nawab. A number of Malabarees, knowing that the town is not defensible, have already removed their most precious belongings to put them in

security. My efforts to reassure them have been in vain; they are convinced that we are going to be attacked at the first opportunity.

The cause of these movements of the English and of Muhammad Ali Khan can indeed be traced to the letter they have recently received from Europe. But as much as I can conjecture from certain gossip, this is the matter in question.

The Court of England is not at all happy, with the conduct of the Governor and of the Council of Madras *vis-a-vis* General Coote, still more with the kind of captivity in which the Council keeps the Nawab who has several times complained that since the re-establishment of the French nation, he had never been allowed to move out of Madras and set up his residence either at Arcot or at Trichinopoly. Whereupon it appears, that a very positive order has been given to allow Muhammad Ali Khan to go wherever he likes. Some one told me that on the very day the letters arrived, the Governor of Madras had intimated to him (Muhammad Ali Khan) that he could go to Trichinopoly. He is indeed preparing, according to reports, to march there while passing through Arcot, and it is because of this that some battalions of sipahees have been withdrawn from several places in order to form a corps of troops to accompany him. But as the presence of the Nawab is not at all necessary at Trichinopoly and as this march after so many years of refusal from the Council of Madras could proclaim to the whole province that the complaints of the Nawab have at last prevailed over the Council of Madras, they have sought a pretext to spare him this source of annoyance and a more convenient one could not be found than that of spreading a report of an impending war and that the Nawab's intention in going to Trichinopoly is only to attack us on leaving this place (Madras) so that it should appear that the attack came from him alone without the English having the least share in it.

It is still suspected that the letters recently arrived enclose a very strong reprimand to the Council of Madras on many things that have passed between it and General Coote, as well as the announcement of a dispatch in the near future of three councillors, who are my Lord Pigot, Ex-Governor of Madras, General Coote and a third whose name I do not know, with the same powers and instructions as were given to the previous triumvirate which had the misfortune to perish on the frigate l'Aurore.

Haider Ali Khan continues to be shut up in Srirangapattan, with the Maratha army spread all over his territory, but in such a manner that the effect of the hostilities is not felt severely, thanks to the army chief, whom Haider Ali Khan has won over with some presents. It even appears, from what M. Hüguel writes to me, that peace would soon be signed, an event which is very desirable for him (M. Hüguel). Once this peace is concluded, I wish that he could make it convenient to visit this place, at least for a few days; we have to speak together about many things on which I think we do not see eye to eye.

M. Hüguel wants me to send him soldiers, gunners, and that too the pick of the garrison. It is an impossibility short of inviting the wrath of Muhammad Ali Khan and of exposing ourselves to die here of starvation for lack of provisions. I explained this to the Council which is of the same opinion on this subject, over which a resolution has been passed. Besides, I provide here, as secretly as possible, on the King's account, for all the other petty demands addressed to me by M. Hüguel for himself as well as for the officers who are serving under him. He has recently written to M. Delacheze, Russel and Bouthenot asking them to join him. For that purpose they need some preparations entailing expenses for which indeed an advance has to be made. In view of the avarice and the crafty conduct of Haider Ali Khan who almost refuses every kind of help to M. Hüguel, I am very much afraid his party may be a burden on this colony.

There is nothing new to report about the proceedings between the English plenipotentiaries and me since my last letter, of which I enclose herewith the duplicate as well as the second copy of the continuation of our correspondence. I have already pointed out to your Excellency the difficulties which for the present stand in the way of initiating the affairs of Bengal. A dispute arose some time back between our Chief at Yanam and that of the English on the point of certain duties which the latter claimed on the goods which belonged to our Chief. Our complaints have been lodged with the Council of Madras which, by its reply, would like to scrap an old practice founded, we assert, on firmans and paravanas which we ought to uphold, but which, for many reasons, it is not advisable to submit to the judgement of our rivals, unless we are quite sure that we can refute it. Besides, in my opinion, this affair may

be a precedent for our disputes in Bengal, so that before initiating it with the English plenipotentiaries, I would like, by some explanations, to be in a position to know the turning which it may take, and that requires time. There are in the commission, with which I have been charged, some delicate points which must be handled with the greatest precautions. It appears to me quite clear that in the principle of the establishment of the European nations in India, either through haste or through over-confidence on the part of interpreter-writers whom we were obliged to employ for want of the knowledge of the local language, we have been misled in the form and terms of the firmans and paravanas granted by the Prince and the Nawabs. That is evident from the old translations, which we possess, of these firmans, which are not as faithful as they ought to have been. And what shows that we have been misled is the fact that things have none the less been established according to the translations or rather according to the intention of the Europeans who were negotiating, so that they were satisfied, not doubting that they were leaving a door open to many wranglings which could be raised consequently. On the other hand, it is equally true that as the private trade of the European nations slowly became more extended, they arrogated to themselves certain rights, certain privileges which could be called in question. The practice, however, prevailed as a result of the presents which were made, from time to time, to the Nawabs and to the different chiefs with whom they had to deal. The English were in this position quite in the same way as we are at present. It is indeed, it may be said, this situation which has been one of the first causes of the differences which had arisen in Bengal and which gave rise to this revolution which has so much turned in their favour. Today they are the masters (I mean the English Company). They are quite aware of the drawbacks in their old paravanas and are quite sure of the weakness of ours in certain points. As the Nawabs and the Rajas are under their domination, for, they (the English) are everywhere charged with the collection of the duties, they want to turn the circumstance to account to humiliate us and reduce us to the lowest possible position. The negotiations between the English plenipotentiary and me on the subject of the firmans, paravanas, privileges, etc., can never turn to our advantage if we enter into certain discussions and do not confine ourselves to take the practice ever established as the true interpretation of these documents although not clearly explained.

Herewith is attached a copy of a letter which our Council has received from M. Pirault, our Consul at Basra, from which it appears that Karim Khan has ceded to the nation (French) the Island of Kurek where the Dutch had formerly established themselves. I hope M. Pirault has sent to France a much more circumstantial detail of this affair. As we have no means here to undertake a mission on that side, we have taken the decision to write about it to M. le Chevalier Desroches by sending him a copy of the letter from M. Pirault. Perhaps he will decide to send a small ship in the Persian Gulf to see how the matter stands.

The English are making preparations, in the name of the Nawab, for a great expedition in the Marava, more serious, to all appearances, than that of Tanjaour. This kingdom forms a part of the Coast in the Gulf of Manar between Madura and the Kingdom of Tanjaour. The capital is Namenadebouram; it is crossed by some rivers whose mouths, it is reported, form ports safe for the ships of average size. Pearl-fishing is partly a cause of this expedition.

Some time back the English Chief of Vizagapatam on the Orissa Coast, while returning to Madras by land, paid a visit to the Nawab Bassalat Jang in Condavir. I do not know what passed between them. M. Gardé, who is at the head of a French detachment in these parts, has not yet written to me anything about this interview. However, there is a report these days of a detachment which must have left Madras a week ago to proceed to Condavir. I know that this detachment (French) formerly commanded by one Babel, *alias* Zéphir, had greatly aroused the jealousy of the English. I am very much afraid there is some plan formed to destroy it.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

LAW DE LAURISTON

Herewith is attached a copy of a letter which our Council has received from M. Piraut, our Consul at Pegu, from which it appears that Kasim Khan has ceded to the nation (French) the Island of Curaik where the Dutch had formerly established themselves. I hope M. Piraut has sent to Kasim Khan a more circumstantial detail of this affair. As long as we do not intend to undertake a mission on that side, we have taken the precaution to write about it to M. le Chevalier Desnoyers, by sending him a copy of the letter from M. Piraut. Perhaps he will decide to send a small ship in the Persian Gulf to see how the matter stands.

The English are making great preparations in the name of the Nawab, for a great expedition in the Maravas, more serious, to all appearances, than that of Tanjore. This kingdom forms a part of the Coast in the Gulf of Manar between Madura and the Kingdom of Tanjore. The capital is Ramanathapuram; it is crossed by some rivers whose mouths form many ports safe for the ships of every size. Pearl-fishing is perhaps the cause of this expedition.

Some time back the English Chief of Vizagapatam on the Orissa Coast, while returning to Madras by land, paid a visit to the Nawab Basalat Jang in Condavir. I do not know what passed between them. M. Garde, who is at the head of a French detachment in those parts has not yet informed me anything about this interview. However, there is a report (some days) of a detachment which must have left Madras a week ago to proceed to Condavir. I know that this detachment (French), formerly commanded by M. Babel, [illegible], had greatly aroused the jealousy of the English. I am very much afraid there is some plan formed to destroy it.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

Law de Lauriston

Archives of the Ministry for the Colonies

India File—522 and 536, C. No. 10, No. 44

Archives of the Ministry for the Colonies *

INDIA FILE—522. C. NO. 10. NO. 44

All the Indian princes are grieved at the presence of such a formidable power (that of the English) among them, but their (of the English) most dreadful enemies are the Marathas; they (the Marathas) have against the English two complaints for which they cannot forgive them. The first concerns the tribute from Bengal. The Emperor of Delhi had ceded to the Marathas, who re-established him on the throne, the fourth part of the revenues of the Empire; Bengal forms part of this cession. They claim this tribute and the English refuse it. The second is the conquest which the English have made of Tanjaour in the name of their Nawab. This kingdom belonged to a prince of the religion of the Marathas; he was their ally. They therefore came to his succour with a formidable army; but a sudden revolution forced them to return to Delhi [10]. The plan of attacking the English is only deferred, and people expect that they would soon reappear with very formidable forces.

To succeed in its projects, this nation, aware of the superiority of European troops over theirs, desired to form an alliance with us. M. Law, by his letter dated February 24, 1772, wrote that Madhavrao, Chief of the great Marathas of Poona, made proposals to him through persons who offered the following terms:—

1. That we shall bring into India and pass into the service of the Marathas ten thousand men who are supposed to be stationed at the Isle of France, with the arms, munitions and artillery for the various operations in which they could be employed.

2. The Marathas promise to give us in full proprietorship all the territory of Haider Ali Khan which is situated on this side of the Ghats and of which the annual revenue amounts to from 30 to 40 lakhs of rupees, and exempt the whole province of the Carnatic and its dependencies from the levy of the Chauthai; pay in cash for all

*These are important documents but unfortunately, microfilms of these documents could not be obtained. These are copies of extracts; the original documents are missing.

the expenses of the army and for those of Pondicherry until we are undisturbed possessors of the said territory.

3. To cede to us in full proprietorship Bassein and its dependencies on the Malabar Coast.

4. To establish our affairs in Bengal and elsewhere, as we would desire it.

5. That our enemies will always be theirs; that they will give us the succours which we shall need; that so long as we shall be at peace with the English, they (the Marathas) will not oblige us to attack them or to harm them in any manner; but that, if, on the contrary, war happened to be declared between us and the English, the Marathas, from this moment, would consider them as their own enemies.

6. That as soon as the treaty was concluded, they would undertake to see that Nizam Ali ceded to us the provinces in the neighbourhood of Masulipatam, fetching 20 lakhs of rupees as annual revenue for the maintenance of a body of troops in the service of Nizam Ali.

This treaty was read and examined in the Executive Council of Pondicherry, and it was unanimously agreed that it was the only means to re-establish ourselves and to humble the power of the English. This decision was dispatched to the Minister.

It must be admitted, and M. Law, by his letter dated February 12, 1774, is entirely convinced that if the Maratha nation wished to act in unison, it would be impossible for the English to withstand it, because it is in a position to attack them everywhere and simultaneously. The Marathas of Poona could ravage the Carnatic and those of Nagpur and Cuttack fall on Bengal. They could likewise attack them at Surat where resides the major part of their forces. Then the English would be utterly lost because of the impossibility of collecting their revenues.

They would neither be able to pay their sipahees nor bear the expenses of the war. They would be obliged to confine themselves to their forts and accept the conditions which, as allies of the Marathas, we would dictate to them.

INDIA FILE—536

Elucidation on the proceedings between the Nawab Nizam Ali Khan and Raghoba, Chief or General of the Marathas.

... The said Nawab (Nizam Ali Khan) had at that time with him 20,000 cavalry; the said Raghoba asked him to raise twice as much. The Nawab gave his orders to the killedars, jamindars, etc., in his dependencies, to join him with their armies. The said Nawab Nizam Ali Khan and Raghoba, Chief of the Marathas, are making preparations to descend into the Carnatic with an army of about 1,40,000 cavalry. They are camping in the province of Barrade [11] on the other side of the Krishna River, and they detached in advance 50,000 cavalry under Mudhoji Bhonsle, who has established his camp on this side of the Krishna at a place called Cerpé [12].

About three or four months back the so-called Baburao and Sayyad Hussein, the former is a chief of ten to twelve thousand Maratha cavalry and the latter is another chief under the orders of the former, who live together in a fortress called Gurumkonda, which belongs to the Marathas, wrote a letter to M. Law to say that the Chief of the Marathas by name Narayanrao desired to cultivate the friendship of the French and seek their assistance in case of need. Thereupon, M. Law sent a present consisting of a pair of pistols and a costly gun along with a letter to this Chief of the Marathas. The packet was addressed to the same Baburao who dispatched it to its destination. This Maratha Chief, in return, sent a letter in reply to M. Law and a present which is called a sarpech. Simultaneously with this sarpech and this letter meant for M. Law, Baburao received the news that this Maratha Chief Narayanrao was killed by his uncle Raghoba who succeeded him and who, having been apprised of the sarpech and the letter which his predecessor had dispatched to M. Law through the intermediary of this Baburao, called him (Baburao) to his presence to seek better information. At the time of his departure, the said Baburao advised Sayyad Hussein to inform M. Law that he (Baburao) could not send him this letter and this present from this Maratha Chief, in view of the fact that he had learnt about his death, and to communicate to M. Law the present position on this subject, and also apprise him that this new Maratha Chief also desired to cultivate the friendship of the French. M. Law received this letter three or four days ago.

It is reported that one of the clauses of this treaty of Raghoba with Nizam Ali is that the princes Nizam Ali and Bassalat Jang were to join Raghoba to invade the Carnatic and that all the three must persuade Haider Ali Khan to unite with them and pounce all together upon Muhammad Ali and the English.

C[2] 139, f. 97-97 v°

Colonies

Department of India

Maratha affairs.

Pondicherry, October 21, 1775

My Lord,

Before the present letter reaches you, you must have received that of June 3, which I delivered to M. Beyliè, Captain of the Artillery Corps, who was leaving for France on leave. This officer must have also talked to you about some proposals which he was charged to put forward on behalf of the Great Chief of the Marathas.

The object of the present letter is simply to accompany some presents and a letter from this Chief to His Majesty. The whole is addressed to M. Beylié who will receive your orders on this subject, my Lord.

The war between the Marathas and the English on the Malabar Coast is still going on. The rains have abated its intensity for some time, but everything will be on the move again on both sides. However, it is reported that the Supreme Council of Calcutta, who opposes this war, has sent orders for a quick pacification, so that everything might be settled earlier than is expected. Nevertheless, no permanent settlement is possible between the Marathas and the English. The latter's power has already extended so much that they cannot remain quiet and the Marathas are too anxious and jealous not to seek all the means to protect themselves from the danger which threatens them.

I am very sincerely

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

LAW DE LAURISTON

C2 142, f.13-14

Colonies

Department of India

Advance for secret expenses No. 3

Pondicherry, 5th February 1776

My Lord de Sartine,[13]
Minister for the Navy.

My Lord,

The Maratha affair, about which I had the honour to give you an account by my letter dated 20th October, forced me to make an advance of Rs. 300 of which I could not receive payment from the Treasury, for every voucher which is delivered for whatsoever sum becomes, so to say, public because of the number of signatures which it must bear, and because it passes through different departments in which there are several clerks and even native scribes. It was not advisable to thus compromise an operation which demands the greatest secrecy and in which the slightest negligence, the slightest indiscretion could have most serious consequences for us, and for certain persons who have a stake in it, could cost them their life, as you must have seen it from the details given to you by M. Beylié. I, therefore, took the decision to make from my pocket the advance of Rs. 300 which it was necessary to give to the agents who had brought the letters and the presents from the Chief of the Marathas, reserving the right to seek from you a special order for its repayment here as a secret expense about which I have given you an account. I request you, my Lord, to kindly send me this order, pure and simple, because as I have pointed out to you, every voucher passes through the hands of a number of persons who neither can nor ought to be trusted. The slightest indication about the transaction, which has caused this expense, whether it materialises or not, might result in most serious consequences.

I have the honour to inform you, my Lord, that circumstances may arise when I would be obliged to act thus. It would be necessary that in such cases you kindly authorize me to receive payment from the

Treasury for these matters by a simple demand from me for secret expenses for which I would render an account to you alone.

I am most respectfully
My Lord
Your very humble and very obedient servant
LAW DE LAURISTON

C^2 142, f. 42-44 v°

Colonies
Department of India, Surat
Duplicate No. 7. Pondicherry, 14th February 1776

My Lord de Sartine,
Minister for the Navy.

My Lord,

I find from the news which has reached us from Surat that the English power is increasingly expanding on that side. That cannot but be otherwise since it has no European enemies to fight and since the Maratha nation, the only one which could hold its own against the English, is today so divided that one half of it is prevented from acting by fear or indifference and a good few of the other half find their interest even in supporting the English.

M. Anquetil Briancourt, our Consul at Surat, is full of zeal for the honour and interests of the Nation. He informs me that he expects to finally obtain the permission to hoist the flag on our factory, this matter having been referred to the decision of the respective superiors in Europe. I believe that after all, it ought to be quite a matter of indifference to the English. The Dutch have indeed their flag there, why should we not have ours? We had it formerly and this right was withdrawn only because of debts which were contracted by the (French) Company at Surat ruined at the beginning of this century. But what I fear is that the English might pretend to consider this affair as very important and that they might turn to account in Europe as a great sacrifice on their part the complaisance which they will perhaps like to show in putting up with it. However, the truth is that the credit of the Nation at Surat will not in the least be augmented by it, considering the circumstances, since the

English will none the less be masters to do what they like in this town which today depends on them almost as much as Masulipatnam. Has the flag which we have in this latter place proved to us up to the present of the slightest advantage? M. de Briancourt informs me that he is working with the principal Maratha Chiefs on a treaty by which the French flag would no longer run the risk of being insulted in the seas of the Malabar Coast which for five to six months of the year are infested by the pirates. It is certainly very desirable that such a treaty should take place, provided it is sure and solid. But I doubt very much whether M. de Briancourt will succeed in it. In the present circumstances, as the Marathas are at war with the English, they will certainly make offers, promises, but immediately after the conclusion of peace of which one of the conditions, according to the English custom, will probably be that the Marathas should renounce all the treaties with us, I repeat, immediately after the conclusion of peace, it will be the same story over again : our flag will be no more respected than that of the other nations and we shall be the poorer for the expenses which might have to be incurred. We need not today depend much upon the steps of M. de Briancourt on this subject, because it happens that by an accident one of his letters for Europe in which the whole affair and many others, of course, were explained, fell into the hands of the English Chief at Surat and which he at once forwarded to the Governor of Bombay. Thereupon, the English, after some squibs, must not have failed to take their measures. Perhaps the intimation which M. Picot of Mahè gives me is the result of it. He tells me that when he was at Bombay, the English said to him that since M. de Briancourt was but a Consul, they would correspond with him only in commercial matters, and that they would not consent to his taking part in the national matters and in political negotiations with them. This intimation is worth attention; it will perhaps be necessary to bestow on M. de Briancourt another capacity which can cover the political talents which he may possess and enable him to display them usefully.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Yours very humble and very obedient servant

LAW DE LAURISTON

C^2 156, f. (87-97 v°)

Reflexions on the proposal to send 4,000 men to Delhi

4th June 1777

It is not possible to send successfully and in a manner useful for the subsequent operations 4,000 men to the Emperor at Delhi, either *via* Tatta or *via* Surat, unless we have first concluded a treaty of alliance with some of the great powers in India who can support and assist the march of a corps of troops. We would rather succeed in sending there only two to three hundred men of whom, I suppose, not much notice would be taken. My reasons are :

1. The dispatch of 4,000 men in the interior of India can hardly be made without forcing the English to declare war against us, either directly or as auxiliaries of some Indian power.

2. The Emperor has neither troops nor money. The Nawabs and Rajas, his subjects, who have themselves become independent sovereigns in their different provinces, being bent on keeping him in his present state of impotency, will never see quietly a body of 4,000 men march to Delhi. They will think that our idea is to re-establish the power of the Emperor such as it was in the times of Aurangzeb. The English will consequently not fail to suggest to them that of uniting against us. The alarm once spread in the country, finding everywhere enemies to fight supported by the English troops, it would be a folly to think of proceeding to Delhi with 4,000 men. Half will not reach the place, and even if they reached there, I go still further, even if the four thousand men were united there by miracle, I still assert that if we were solely allied with the Emperor, we would be forced to succumb, for, this Prince being by himself powerless, we would have to consider all the noblemen of the Empire as enemies.

Therefore, it is not with the Emperor that we must begin to negotiate for the dispatch of 4,000 men; it is not even with any of the Indian powers who surround him in the north of Hindustan and who have no actual interest either in Bengal or in the part of the Deccan. I see a large number of these Muhammedan powers or noblemen spread in the north whose alliance would not help us much to beat the English power. These powers

have their own territory to preserve against outside incursions. They have to assert their respective interests against one another, for which they will try to employ our four thousand men, rather than neglect them or sacrifice them by leaving their territory to march with us to Bengal. *But well and good, my critics will say to me, let us leave aside Bengal and the Deccan, our four thousand men whom the sky would very much like to cover with a cloud to conceal them from the eyes of our ememies, once these four thousand men were landed in the province of Tatta, shall we not be amply compensated by the possession of a territory, rich and abundant, as it is depicted in the letters of M. Chevalier? Our alliances, the different operations which we shall be in a position to undertake, will render us a formidable power on this side.*

I have no objection to that; I wish that, in spite of the obstacles which the jealousy of the English might raise against us, we succeed in establishing ourselves solidly in the province of Tatta. I ask what is the aim of our establishments in India ? Is it not trade with France ? The question would, therefore, be to know if the province of Tatta can furnish us products in replacement of the goods from Bengal, and of those from the Coasts of Malabar, Coromandel and Orrisa. In short, is this province worth abandoning the interests which we have elsewhere? For, we ought to consider that if our forces do not make their presence felt in the parts of India where our establishments are situated today, the English would have such a hold in these parts that our trade will be destroyed there. If Tatta can furnish the products of India we need in Europe, there is nothing better than to transfer ourselves there by abandoning all the rest; we shall stay there in tranquility. We can even think that the English, content with what they possess, will not come there to wrangle with us. But as, according to me, Tatta cannot at all take the place of Bengal and of our establishments on the coasts of the Peninsula, I come back to the same conclusion that the aim of the dispatch of 4,000 men to Delhi ought to be less the possession of Tatta than humbling of the English power in the parts of India from which we obtain goods for Europe. Now as the treaties which we could conclude with the powers in the neighbourhood of Delhi will not help us much to crush the English power, we must seek some others whose alliance would be more useful to us.

I do not see any which would suit us better than that of the Marathas. This warlike nation is spread everywhere, but before everything, we must

try to unite the leading members who are today, thanks to English politics, so divided and opposed to each other that it is hardly possible to rely on the success of a project formed in concert with them. There are two main branches of the Marathas from which issue several offshoots which, having become powerful and moreover, supported by the English, sometimes turn against the very body to which they belong. These two main branches, as they form today two different nations, are the Marathas of Poona of which the royal family is confined at Satara, and the Marathas of Berar and Cuttack, etc., of which the head, who really belongs to the royal family detained at Satara, holds his court at Nagpur. The Marathas of Poona are today governed by a Regency in the name of a child, a descendant of the family of Nana or Balajirao who had usurped the government.

It seems to me that it would not be impossible to find some grounds strong enough to induce these two main branches, the Marathas of Poona and those of Nagpur, to unite for the common cause.

We can impress upon them that the aim of the English is to destroy them slowly at the hands of each other, a design in which all that has taken place proves that they will succeed, if they (the Marathas) do not unite; that as they would be supported by a large body of French troops in Europeans and sipahees and that, moreover, as a special treaty would be concluded with the Mughal Emperor who would remain in their power, who would march at their head, and in whose name all the operations would be conducted, they will definitely surmount all the obstacles which might be raised against the execution of the projects they may have formed to give to the Empire of Hindustan a form of government of their choice; that as they already possessed in their own right a vast stretch of territory and as they had the rights of the Chauth on generally all the revenues of the Mughal Empire, rights supported by the presence of the Prince who would march with them, and by the forces of our nation, there is good ground to suppose that many Pathan or Mughal Nawabs as well as the most powerful Rajas in the Empire will unite and march under their flag, because of fear of being punished for an inaction which would be considered as ill will on their part, as well as because of the hope of gaining something in the changes which would take place; that because of the conquest almost assured of Bengal, even of the territory of Asaf-ud-Daulah if he offered resistance and that of the Carnatic, Marawa, Madura,

of the provinces on the coast of Orissa which would nevertheless remain in the possession of Nizam Ali, they would have something with which not only to extend their own dominions, but also to reward those who would have been attached to their interests.

In short, the alliance with the Marathas is what appears to me safest for all our operations, either on the side of Delhi, or in the region of Tatta or in Bengal. As this nation is in a position to deal blows in several directions simultaneously, we must have a corps of 3,000 Europeans and 10,000 sipahees with the Marathas of Poona who would operate in the peninsula, and as many with the Marathas of Nagpur for the whole of Bengal and the provinces depending on it.

Once our treaty with the Marathas is concluded in the name of the Mughal Emperor, nothing would be easier than effecting a union of our forces with them, either through the peninsula or through Bengal or some other part of India. We have different Maratha ports open to us on the Malabar Coast; we have on the Orissa Coast the small port of Cujang, which belongs to the Marathas and where landings can be made, and from where we can easily penetrate into Bengal, either in the south or by marching up to the north-west. As for the Mughal Emperor, there would then be no necessity to send 4,000 French men to Delhi. It is he who would come and join us. As the Marathas hold in pledge a number of places round about Delhi and as they always have strong forces pushed as far as that place, the Mughal Emperor would form by their union a small army with which he would come and meet us wherever we would be; besides, if we insisted on beginning by the dispatch of a body of troops to Delhi, the best routes and the shortest pass through the Maratha Konkan Coast territories which adjoin the Malabar Coast. We would also, if we wanted, form through their channel agreements with Nizam Ali, Bassalat Jang and various Pathan chiefs or nobles whom we would meet on the way.

I, therefore, say that the alliance which suits us best is that of the Marathas. We can unite them in a manner so as not to be exposed to see either of them against us. I go still further, I do not see how without the Marathas we can execute the project of passing 4,000 men into the service of the Mughal Emperor. This nation is spread everywhere, its own dominions pass through the entire Mughal Empire; absolutely nothing is done

without it. Thus, it must necessarily be for us or against us. I have demonstrated that with it greatest difficulties will be surmounted. But having it against us, joined to the forces of the English who would soon succeed in uniting all the Maratha bodies, if they found it suited their interest, what could we do? I would not then see any other alternative than that of uniting all the Muhammedan powers, which is a work much more difficult than that of the union of the Marathas, and almost impossible. They are all extremely jealous of one another. None by itself is in a position, either to force the others to unite or to support us against the enemies whom we would have to fight.

Leaving for the present those who, as they are in the extreme north, can hardly be useful to us, I see among these Muhammedan powers Asaf-ud-daulah, son of Shuja-ud-daulah, who holds the key to Bengal in the north-west. If this Nawab were on our side and if we had a body of troops fully trained and conveyed in the north of Hindustan, the entry into Bengal would certainly be easy for us. But taking for granted even the good will of this Nawab, of what utility can he be to us for the landing of our troops and their march in the north through the Maratha territories, which I ought to take for granted here as non-hostile, he who has not an inch of ground in the coastal provinces of the Empire? Besides, far from being friendly to us we ought to consider him as entirely devoted to the English who, by reducing him to a state almost similar to that of the Nawabs of Bengal and the Carnatic, have deprived him of the right of self-determination. Thus, it is a power on which we must not count. Because of the influence of the English over these Nawabs and Rajas of India, whom they keep in awe, can we not say they are as many cockroaches which a single blister-fly dominates by its flight around them so as to stop all their movement.

I also see at the head of these Muhammedan powers Nizam Ali, Bassalat Jang and Haider Ali Khan. These three princes, who have not yet become slaves of the English, can really be useful to us, if they will act in concert with us, but not for sending 4,000 men to Delhi. Neither Haider Ali Khan, nor Nizam Ali nor Bassalat Jang would like to quit his territory at the risk of seeing it invaded by the Marathas to follow us either to Delhi, or in Bengal. The advantages which we can today derive from an alliance with these three princes can extend only to the peninsula and along the coast of Orissa.

Nizam Ali and Bassalat Jang, descendants of the famous Nizam-ul-Mulk, who still have relatives and connections among the Pathans and the noble families in the parts of Hindustan round about Delhi, could in fact give us recommendations whereby we would perhaps succeed in forming some party, at the head of which would be the Mughal Emperor against Asaf-ud-daulah who, supported by the English, would perhaps close to us the door to enter into Bengal; that is all the more probable as the family of the Nizam is a sworn enemy of that of Asaf-ud-daulah. But once again, if we have the Marathas against us, we would always be defeated, and if we must have them on our side, we should better try in the beginning to negotiate with them alone for the affairs in the north. It may be that, unable to unite all the Marathas in our favour, we would at least have a considerable number of men on our side. In that case, while negotiating with them and through their channel, we must try to attach to us Muhommedan parties, either in the peninsula or in the extreme north, which could best contribute to the success of our operations. The Ruhela Pathans would be among these; they would be delighted to attack the territory of Asaf-ud-daulah.

By his latest letters, M. Chevalier demands only 2,000 men in all in infantry and artillery, for the expedition of Tatta. He asserts that it will be easy to land them and to put them in possession of the province. In fact, supposing that these troops, starting from the Isle of France without the knowledge of the English, immediately proceed to the mouth of the Indus with money and ample provisions, in short, with all the necessities of life, I am ready to believe that finding that the people were living in great security and not expecting any invasion, our 2,000 men will not have great difficulty in becoming masters of Tatta (whether this province has been already granted to us by the Mughal Emperor or not does not matter much, because his will has the least consideration in India. Once the province is in our hands, we shall obtain its patents much more easily); fright spread, our 2,000 men will be equal to 20,000 in the mind of the people of the country, but what will be the result of the expedition? The great difficulty is to preserve the place; people soon recover from a panic-terror. The news spread would not fail to attract the Marathas as well as the English on this side. The Governor of the province, better acquainted with the local situation than we can be, will act in his turn and seek means to expel the foreigners of whom

he will soon have recognized the small number. I have nothing to say if it is thought certain that the Marathas and the English will leave us alone. The commandant of our 2,000 men, if he is experienced in Indian politics, if for example, it is M. Chevalier himself who commands them, can succeed, after exploring the situation, in forming alliances in the very region or in the neighbourhood, by means of which he can withstand the ventures of the governor whom he will have expelled. But honestly can we be sure that the English will watch as unconcerned spectators such an establishment? Can we be sure that with 2,000 men, not having the Marathas on our side, we can hold out for long against the forces which the English will continuously raise against us?

The success at Tatta and of the subsequent events on the side of Delhi entirely depends, according to me, on a treaty with the Marathas. Simultaneously with the enterprise on Tatta or even before, we must form an alliance with this nation and have with it a corps of 2,000 or 3,000 Europeans and 8,000 to 10,000 sipahees. That cannot be done, I think, unless war is declared between us and the English. And consequently, we must also have other forces to employ on the Malabar Coast in concert with Haider Ali Khan as well as on this Coast and on that of Orissa to act in concert either with Nizam Ali or with the Marathas of Nagpur.

Once the capture of Tatta has taken place, our troops will at the same time march with the Marathas in the north and after the union with the Mughal Emperor, turn and act against the provinces of Asaf-ud-daulah. On the other hand, our army on the Orissa Coast after joining the Marathas of Nagpur, will penetrate into Bengal through the heart of the province, whilst our fleet would enter it and take possession of the entire lower mouth of the Ganges. It is then that we should hope to see at last this colossus of the English power fall.

It will be seen from whatever I have stated that we must employ great means; the small ones will never suffice although they should not be in the meanwhile rejected. I cannot agree on the great facility which M. Chevalier emphasizes in all the operations. " We must ", he says, to make sure of success " only pay attention to the superiority of the Europeans over all the Asiatics ". " The English," he adds, " every day furnish us convincing proofs of it in their progress and their conquests.

It is with a handful of men that they attack and beat the large armies which they put to rout and create awe as extraordinary people."

M. Chevalier considers the English forces as insignificant. However, this nation has in India about 10,000 European soldiers and 60,000 sipahees, armed and disciplined in the European manner and commanded by European officers, in addition to the troops of the Nawabs and the Rajas whom they have subdued and who are at their disposal. But M. Chevalier appears to be reluctant to pay any importance to the sipahees. That is where he is mistaken, according to me. Long ago we could no longer have thought of the English without their sipahees. But in the state in which things are and in which they have always been since our re-establishment, how can M. Chevalier cite the example of the English as a guarantee of a complete success in our enterprises? The English, he says, have succeeded by their arms as well as by their politics; therefore, we ought to succeed. What a difference? The English did not have other obstacles to surmount than those which the ymet from the people of the country. Did they have to fight the arms and the intrigues of a European nation as powerful and even more powerful than theirs in India? Would they have obtained a fourth of the successes they have gained if we had opposed their progress? This is, however, the situation which we are going to face when we shall begin to act. Can M. Chevalier convince himself that the English, dominant as they are in India, will have the kindness not to interfere with us? Should he not rather think that the greatest obstacles we shall have to surmount will come from the English who are fully aware that our successes can only be prejudicial to them.

C² 148, f. 07-9 v°

My Lord de Sartine, Pondicherry, July 3, 1777

Minister for the Navy.

My Lord,

I am replying in detail to the letter No. 4, which you wrote me in connection with Rs. 300 which I had paid to the agents of the Maratha Chief of Poona, expenses for which you think, my Lord, I have not given a sufficiently satisfactory details, i.e. the reasons which necessitated it. There are none others than those which are the outcome of the usage

established in India of giving either money or sóme articles as presents to the envoys of Indian powers who have to be treated with consideration. It's an indispensable obligation especially whenever some negotiation is initiated with these powers, and the value of the present more or less depends on the position of the envoys and on the importance of the subject-matter which is being negotiated.

I had received orders from the Minister to win over, as much as it is possible, the sympathy of the Indian Princes in favour of the nation, to start negotiations which could be useful and finally prepare the way for the events which might supervene.

Since 1770 and 1771, the Marathas of Poona, through various deputations, had expressed to me their desire to form an alliance with us. After many pourparlers, when I saw that they persisted in their intentions, and were determined to offer us reasonable proposals, I presented in January 1772 to the Members of the Secret Committee a memorandum on this subject in which (in view of the differences which prevailed between the Marathas and Haider Ali Khan) I made a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages that would accrue to the nation from one side as well as from the other. This memorandum, of which the conclusion is in favour of the Marathas, was at once dispatched to the Minister along with the discussion which resulted from it. I have no more heard of it, nay I have not even received any acknowledgement of its receipt. I employed M. Beyliè for this negotiation. Since the Marathas persisted in spite of our silence which I explained to them in as favourable a manner as I could, in 1775 I charged M. Beyliè, who was leaving for France, to explain to you, my Lord, all this affair, for, to have a thorough understanding of it, it was necessary to enter into a number of details which it was hardly possible to put into writing, especially because of Muhammad Ali Khan, our Nawab of the Carnatic, who could play a role in it.

M. Beyliè was to carry some presents, but these had not yet arrived when the ship on which he embarked set sail in June 1775. These presents were delivered to me only two or three months afterwards and left in October of the same year on the ship l'Alliance, addressed to M. Beyliè who must have received them. I had the honour to write to you simultaneously on this subject.

I ought, therefore, to suppose that M. Beyliè must have had with you, my Lord, some talk on the subject he was charged to explain to you on my behalf. I could not certainly employ a better way to give you all the possible explanations on as important a matter as that of an alliance contemplated with the Marathas who are, it can be said even today, the most powerful nation in India in spite of the divisions prevailing in it.

The said Rs. 300 were given to the agents who brought here the presents. On the one hand, you are quite aware that we are bound to give them. Indeed, while receiving the presents, we had necessarily, either to run the risk of displeasing the agents, an act which would have had a very bad effect on their return to Poona, or to satisfy at least partially their cupidity to which general usage authorizes them. They expected a present much beyond Rs. 300; they were even expecting to carry presents to their master in return. On the other hand, as I believed that you were kept informed, my Lord, as much by my letters as by what M. Beyliè must have related to you, how could I not think that I had given sufficiently satisfactory details on this expense? Pray, my Lord, receive my thanks for the kindness you have had in allowing it to me.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

LAW DE LAURISTON

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that ought, therefore, to suppose that M. Beylié must have had with you, my Lord, some talk on the subject he was charged to explain to you on my behalf. I could not certainly employ a better way to give you all the possible explanations on as important a matter as that of an alliance contemplated with the Marathas who are, it can be said even today, the most powerful nation in India in spite of the divisions prevailing in it.

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I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

LAW DE LAURISTON

M. de Bellecombe

Governor of Pondicherry

1777 – 1778

C^2 147, f. 57-57 v.°

Copy of the letter from M. de Bellecombe, Governor-General at Pondicherry, to the Chief of the Marathas, dated 3rd February 1777

I communicate to you my arrival at Pondicherry as Commandant General of the French establishments in India to replace M. Law who is returning to Europe. France is today governed by a young monarch who possesses all the qualities which characterize a great King. His reputation already resounds everywhere. He is aware of the great power of the Marathas and of the friendly relations which exist between them and us. His desire is to make them more and more intimate and he has charged me to work for it on all occasions. I hope to find some when I can prove to you my dispositions to oblige you.

At present, I am sending M. Coutanceau, an officer of distinction to the Malabar Coast to terminate with Haider Ali Khan some differences which have arisen concerning our establishments in this part. I hope he has an occasion to deliver you this letter and assure you of the sentiments of the Nation as well as of mine in particular. I have greatest confidence in him and you can consider all that he will tell you as if it is from my own mouth and take it as the true intentions of the King of France who desires that the friendship which reigns between us should turn to the common advantage of both the Nations.

Examined. True Copy

Bellecombe Leger

C^2 148, f. 38-43 v.°

Colonies

Department of India Pondicherry, 2nd August 1777

M. de Bellecombe

No. 111—Political

My Lord,

I avail myself of the departure of a small Brig for the Isle of France to send you the duplicate of my dispatches which I sent you by la Consolante.

I seize this occasion to give you an account of the actual state of political affairs. It has not changed much so far as the native princes are concerned. The most important event concerns the English and occurred in Calcutta itself. Here are the details given to me by M. Chevalier:

" General Clavering, having been appointed, as you know, Governor of Calcutta on behalf of the King as well as of the Company, wanted to get recognition in this capacity. Mr. Hastings refused to do so on the ground that he openly repudiated the resignation which his proxy in England had given on his behalf to the Minister without being authorized to do so, and as it was only in consequence of this action that the appointment of Mr. Clavering had been made, he considered it as void. Besides, he adds that it was absolutely illegal, for, as he had been appointed to the post in virtue of the bill of Parliament, it was only by another bill that he could be removed from it before the expiry of his term, and that it neither lay in the power of the King nor of the Company to act otherwise; this is truly in conformity with the principles of the English Constitution. Consequently, he sought in writing the opinion of the Judges and Lord Impey, their President, who declared that he was right and that he would even become guilty if he behaved otherwise. Supported by this decision, Mr. Hastings sent an order to the military commanders not to recognize General Clavering and refuse to obey him. The result was that when the General called at the fort, he was refused admission. The Officer Commanding explained to him that such were the orders and that he could not recognize him as Governor until Mr. Hastings had set the example himself. Except a few creatures of the General, all Calcutta declared in favour of Mr. Hastings. But the outcome of it today is that the Supreme Council is divided into parties which throw blame on each other, the General and Mr. Frances on one side, the Governor and Mr. Barwell on the other. As the latter is the stronger, it also governs. It is considered that the General will take the decision to return to Europe or else he will renounce his claims until he receives fresh orders from England. This odd event put all the persons of the colony of Calcutta into a strange excitement for several days. The final decision taken by Mr. Hastings has restored all things to their former state. It remains to be seen whether his action will receive approval. The English appear to have no doubt about it."

Dispatch of Major Ana to the Emperor

Unfortunately for us, these internal divisions in the English Government do not prevent it from concentrating on its great objective, namely, aggrandizement of its power and of its revenues. The Calcutta Council has now an agent at the Emperor's Court; it is Major Ana[14]. It is thought that the aim of this embassy is to propose a body of auxiliary troops to the Emperor to bring back to obedience all the provinces of the Empire which have for a long time become independent. It is hard for me to believe that that is the object of the English. Their interest is not to make the Mughal Emperor sufficiently powerful so that he should at any moment be in a position to throw off the state of dependence into which they hold him by maintaining discord between the Nawabs and the Rajas, who are his vassals and whom they sometimes oppose against each other, at other times against the Emperor himself, while they peacefully enjoy, during these troubles which they forment, rich provinces of which their superiority in politics rather than that of their arms has made them masters.

Besides, whatever be the aim of Major Ana's journey, it cannot but be unfavourable to us. This nation, in all its proceedings in India, never loses sight of two main points, its rise and our fall, and because of the advantage of its position, the same means serve it to fulfil this double objective.

Return to Calcutta of the agent of the Council from the Poona Court

The agent, whom they had dispatched to the Poona Court, has now returned to Calcutta. M. Laurent, who came from Balasore to Pondicherry overland, met him on his way. He had in his retinue several officers, 500 sipahees, 12 camels, 6 elephants and 400 to 500 peons or coolies. What a difference, Sir, from the air of dignity and grandeur which this nation assumes in all its dealings to this look of pettiness and poverty which is noticed in all our operations. It is not possible to believe how the picture is unfavourable to us.

Poona

I have not yet received a reply to the letter I had written to the Maratha Chief to announce to him my arrival. And yet, I know that it was

delivered to him. But this delay does not surprise me, when I take into account that M. St. Lubin must have arrived at Poona almost simultaneously with my letter. The Poona Regency must have been at a loss what to think when it saw that I announced myself in the capacity of Commandant General, plenipotentiary to negotiate with all the powers in India, especially with the Marathas, whilst M. St. Lubin appears as independent and makes, in the King's name, proposals and treaties. What must the Marathas be thinking of this kind of conflict of power? I have no doubt that this must be the cause of the delay in their reply.

I have not received any news from M. St. Lubin. I heard from the English that his ship was at Chaul and it is reported that he has hoisted a flag there in the King's name.

Deccan : retreat of the armies for the monsoon

It appears from the latest report I received from the Deccan that the combined armies of the Marathas, of Nizam Ali and of Bassalat Jang, have retired. The Marathas are camping on the banks of the Tungabhadra, Nizam Ali returned to Hyderabad and the troops of Bassalat Jang, moved to the vicinity of Adoni. Haider Ali Khan assures me that he was absolutely unperturbed about the result of this war. There is reason to believe that peace will be concluded during the monsoon. I ardently wish it, for, it would grieve me to see mutually wasting away two powers whom we could one day unite to advantage for our cause.

Malabar Coast : troubles caused by the absence of Haider Ali Khan

The absence of Haider Ali Khan from the Malabar Coast has given rise to some troubles there. Zamorin's men, who had retired into the woods, are making incursions and ravaging the neighbourhood of Calicut. Haider Ali Khan has given his orders to Chirakkal and Cartenate (Kadattanad) to dispatch their Nairs to punish the rebels, but neither of them has shown much zeal in the execution of his orders, for which he might indeed express to them his displeasure.

He has not demanded any service from Kurangod Nair. This act of complaisance proves that he is sincere in his dealings with us and that he himself gives to Chirakkal an example to comply with his order to leave Kurangod Nair undisturbed. He has not been troubled up till now for

the tribute. But everything will be truly settled only when the limits of his domain, on which there is no accord with Chirakkal are fixed. I hope the Nawab will give his decision in our favour.

M. de Coutanceau's return delayed by the ill-will of the Portuguese Captains

M. de Coutanceau is still at Mahé for want of an occasion to proceed to this place. The Portuguese ships have refused to give him a passage certainly to please the English who did not take kindly to this officer, charged with a mission at the Court of Haider Ali Khan. I am most impatiently waiting for his arrival so as to give you an account of all the details of his negotiations.

I have taken special steps to facilitate his return. If the means I have employed succeed, he will be here in the beginning of September.

The Nawab of Arcot

The Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan is very much worried about the latest news received from England which appears to be favourable to Lord Pigot. According to reports, the English want to force him to establish his residence at Arcot. I have even been told that he would be inclined to come to Pondicherry. But he will not do so in our present state of weakness. I cannot indeed receive him even if he had really this intention. It would certainly result in troubles, and in our position we ought absolutely to avoid them. It is such, my Lord, that even if the whole Peninsula were to turn topsy-turvy, it would be impossible for us to take the least interest in it and draw from it the slightest advantage.

This Nawab has recently discharged two regiments of sipahees who had revolted, because they had not been paid twenty-five months salary. These two regiments made me an offer for enrolment in our service. It was an excellent opportunity to get for us good sipahees. But as I had no orders to augment the Indian militia and carry it to a requisite strength, I could not accept their offer.

The reports of war have somewhat subsided at Madras. The English, who had already stopped all commercial operations with our French traders and closed their purses, are today willing to negotiate Messrs De

la Rochette et Moracin entrusted with several shipments are actually there, the first with the ship les Trois Amis, the second with the ships le Terray et le Pondicherry. Both found financial assistance which they needed for their operations.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

BELLECOMBE

C^2 148, f. 159-169 v°

Colonies
Department of India
M. de Bellecombe

Pondicherry, 15th October 1777

No. 130

About the copy of a letter from M. St. Lubin and M. de Bellecombe's reply—reflexions on the mission with which he is charged at the Court of the Marathas.

My Lord,

I have the honour to send you herewith the copy of a letter I received from M. de St. Lubin and that of the reply I gave him. I congratulate him on the success of his negotiation. That is what he looks to me to be most deeply interested in. But as I have no better information about the orders he may have received nor about the details of his negotiation, I shall not yet venture, my Lord, to pay you my compliments, especially as I do not see up to the present moment anything very solid in what he tells me he has accomplished.

Alliance and trade with the Marathas, the leading power of Hindustan, are big words which it was easy to emphasize ten years ago, if circumstances had permitted it, and that too at very little expense. Since more

than ten years there is not a power in India, great or small, which does not want to join us to humble that of the English. We can, therefore, make treaties of alliance and trade on all sides. But what will be the result? I am afraid it may turn out to be a mountain which drops a mouse, because of the incompatibility of respective interests among the powers with whom we are negotiating, and especially because of the internal divisions noticed since a long time in the Maratha nation whose support M. de St. Lubin vaunts so much. It is today so much divided into different factions that we cannot rely on the succour on that side, without our enemies being able to say as much. And in that case, where is the advantage which this so-called alliance procures us ? In six months, there will perhaps be no more question about it. You ought to rest assured, my Lord, that any alliance here can last only as long as it will be supported on our part with forces actual and present in India. Unfortunately, we havn't got them and those who can any day become our enemies possess formidable ones. We are at the present moment on the one hand in alliance with Haider Ali Khan, on the other with the Marathas. These alliances are based on conditions to help each other in case of need. If within a year we havn't got forces to put in the field,[15] it would be as if these alliances did not exist at all for all intents and purposes. There may even result much damage from that :

Firstly, because these powers cannot remain idle. They are enemies and even at war actually against each other. They both have, therefore, a right to expect from us prompt succour which we are not in a position to give them.

Secondly, because the English who foresee the trouble which may result for them from an alliance between us and such other power must necessarily employ most effective means to prevent it, by proving to this power the futility of our alliance. Now the best way is to act on one's own initiative. Their (of the English) movements in India appear, really speaking, suspended for some time, which may partly be attributed to the happenings in Europe and America. The strongest reason, however, is the uncertainty in which they may only be, first because of what we want to do ourselves, secondly because of my arrival and finally, because of our various negotiations in India. But soon they will find out what the position is.

Of the two powers which I have just mentioned, that which the English must consider as most inclined to truly unite with us is undoubtedly the Regency of Poona, because of the concessions which they have recently usurped from it by force of arms. We must, therefore, consider that it is against this part of the Maratha nation that the English will soon move by favouring either openly or secretly the expeditions of Haider Ali Khan, so as to prevent it completely from helping us at the commencement of a European war. The Regency of Poona will demand succour from us. If we cannot give it, the result will be that, either this Regency will be completely destroyed to make place for a government favourable to the English, or else this very Regency, realising the futility of our alliance will enter into engagements with the English which it will be difficult to break.

On the other hand, it will be very easy for the English to induce Haider Ali Khan to act still more vigorously than he has done so far against the Marathas of Poona. This Prince is fully informed of what is happening at the Darbar of the Regency. Supposing it to be true what M. de St. Lubin says about *the alliance concluded, signed and sworn between us and this part of the Maratha nation* with which he is at war, it will be easy for the English to impress upon him that this alliance is as much against him as against them. We have, it is true, agreements with him to act only in concert with him. But can it alone reassure him against an alliance made with his enemy? This man is a conqueror. He must continually be in action. The English will offer him succour to extend his conquests. Before accepting it, he would perhaps like to sound us. He will demand from us troops and munitions which we shall not be in a position to give him, or which we would not wish to furnish him, considering that they would be used against the Marathas. Can it be fancied that such a refusal will not lead him to take his decision against our interests, especially when he sees actual offers from the English, and to recall all that happened at Mahé in 1773, 1774 and 1775? In order that an alliance should endure, we must therefore have forces present and ready to act according to the circumstances [15]. Without forces at a distance of 6,000 leagues from the mother country, we cannot count on anything *vis-a-vis* Indian powers whose movements we cannot stop to direct them against the common enemy and who, having each one of them their individual plans to be fulfilled, are likely to demand from us at any moment succour promised in

virtue of an alliance. If we are in default, the alliance ceases. That is the position in which we shall probably be with respect to Haider Ali Khan as well as to the Marathas of Poona. From that moment all our credit will be lost in the mind of the native people. The English will be more dreaded and more respected as a result of that.

I suppose at present that war will take place and that we shall receive forces to take the field. That is indeed the charitable supposition I can make, for, if unfortunately a declaration of war takes us by surprise, in our present state, within a fortnight there will be no more any French establishment in India, unless it is Mahé, and yet I shall not answer for it today. Really speaking I find M. de St. Lubin admirable with his guarantee for all our establishments in India in the name of the Marathas. They will be invaded even before they receive the news of a rupture, and even if they get news of the declaration of war simultaneously with the English, Pondicherry and the other establishments will be captured before the Marathas have sharpened their swords and saddled their horses to run to our succour. *In forty days I shall be with you,* says M. de St. Lubin. Well ! I wish the English have the complaisance to wait for him, or that we are sufficiently lucky to offer a resistance which gives him time to join us. Our establishments in Bengal, Yanam, Masulipatnam and Karikal and perhaps Mahé will nonetheless be stormed. But what will he do on his arrival? Does he think that with a body of twenty-five to thirty thousand Marathas, he is capable of saving Pondicherry [16] ? These Marathas will come and ask me for money [17], will ravage the country and will return without rendering any service[18]. The English will win over their chief or will bring another body of Marathas to oppose it[19]. Really speaking, my Lord, there is nothing like being at a distance of 6,000 leagues to speak with impudence to most respectable persons, for, I have no doubt that M. de St. Lubin has written to you the same thing as to me. It costs nothing to intriguers who have not anything to lose and who, by their impostures, know how to take cover under events. I would not advance what I have the honour to tell you, my Lord, if I hadn't the proof of it from the memorandums written about M. de St. Lubin, which have passed by my hands. I had to come to India to know him well.

I come back to my supposition that war takes place and that we shall receive here forces to enable us to take the field. Here are two powers,

enemies of each other, with which we are in alliance. We shall have to choose. I suppose we shall give preference to the Marathas. It is the nation which is considered as the most powerful and which is most capable of giving us succour. What will be the position of Haider Ali Khan? Can it be fancied that he will remain quiet and that the English will not instigate him, not perhaps directly against us but against these very Marathas, our allies ? It will certainly be a mistake. He will act all the more vigorously as he will see his ruin inevitable in the aggrandizement of the Marathas of Poona, and as he will be encouraged to act not only by the English, but also by several Maratha parties who will join him. In that case, what great help can we derive on this Coast from the Marathas of Poona who themselves will find it very difficult to hold their own? What will these Marathas of Poona do for the expeditions on the Orissa Coast and in Bengal? M. de St. Lubin is greatly mistaken, if he imagines that, because the Marathas of Poona will be our friends, those of Berar and of Orissa Coast will take up arms in our favour. The house of Janoji and Raghuji which is truly of the Maratha Royal blood, is completely independent of the Poona Regency and often behaves on different principles. It is rather with this house that we should have begun our negotiations [20], because we never had anything to fear from the Marathas of Poona and because we were already very much assured about their dispositions to help us against the English. On the other hand, we do not yet know too well how we stand with respect to the Marathas of Berar.

As for me, my Lord, I have always thought that we must have the Marathas as well as Haider Ali Khan on our side. With these two powers we can succeed. If one of them is against us and is on the side of the English, we shall achieve nothing, considering the prodigious advantage which the English already have over us, with respect to the effective strength, the number of their sipahees and the resources they possess of all kinds and which we completely...... I should have wished that the principal aim of a negotiation with the Marathas of Poona had been a perfect reconciliation between them and Haider Ali Khan. That is what I proposed to work for and I had great hopes of succeeding therein by clearly pointing out to them the advantage which would accrue to both from it. In fact, once amicable relations were restored between Haider Ali Khan and the Marathas, the former, having nothing to fear for his domains, could at the first invitation appear in the Carnatic and Tanjaour with

all his forces which would be joined by ours. Certainly, Muhammad Ali Khan and the English would have no chance. Haider Ali Khan had always the great aspiration to seize this territory. As for the Marathas, relieved of all anxiety from the side of Haider Ali Khan, they could easily, with the help of a body of troops which we would maintain with them, not only recapture all what the English have snatched away from them, expel them from Surat and finally reduce them to their old possessions on the Malabar Coast (even supposing that we are unable to capture them), but also initiate the great enterprise on the side of Delhi and from there, through a negotiation with the Marathas of Berar, fall upon Bengal, where our main forces would appear from the other side, either through Chittagong, Dacca, or through the Houghly river, or *via* Cuttack. This open negotiation, you are well aware, my Lord, could take place only on the assumption of a very impending declaration of war, or at least on the arrival of three or four thousand men on this coast, which fact would announce to the Marathas and to Haider Ali Khan that I am in a position to fulfil my engagements with them, for, I always come back to the same conclusion that if we do not wish to move, it is useless to think at this moment of alliances which will not have the slightest durability.

When I arrived in India, I at once recognized that we had nothing to fear from the Marathas, that we were on the best of terms with them as much because they had suffered greatly at the hands of the English, which circumstance has induced them for many years past to seek our alliance. These are facts known all over India. I was therefore least bothered on that side. The very interest of the Marathas forces them to be in our favour, and I would always have had sufficient time to initiate a negotiation with them. It was not so with Haider Ali Khan. I saw in him a conqueror whose power was increasing from day to day and who was decidedly prejudiced against our nation by a chain of events into which we had plunged ourselves quite inopportunely. I thought that my first care ought to be directed to remove from the mind of this Prince ideas which had been suggested to him by the English, by cleverly taking advantage of our false moves. I felt sure I would succeed therein all the more because the whole thing, after all, was only a misunderstanding on both sides, and indeed, I can say that the mission of M. de Coutanceau has had its full and complete success. The proof of it can be seen in the conduct which Haider Ali Khan has shown since my arrival, regarding

the affairs of the establishment of Mahé which were in the most critical position. I am going to write to you a special letter on the result of M. de Coutanceau's mission.

Today, I confess to you, my Lord, I hardly know what Haider Ali Khan is thinking about the arrival of M. de St. Lubin, in the capacity of an envoy of France, the King's agent at the Court of the Marathas. I hope he has all the talents required for such a negotiation. It can only constitute for Haider Ali Khan one more reason to doubt our sincerity towards him, after the tricks M. de St. Lubin played on him in 1768 in favour of the English, tricks which would have led this Nawab to have him trampled by his elephants, if he could lay his hands on him. He is now appointed in the capacity of an envoy at the Court of his enemies with whom he has just concluded a treaty of alliance in the name of France. If this fact is true, certainly Haider Ali Khan knows it. What unpleasant inferences must he have drawn from the proposals I notified to him through M. de Coutanceau? His silence gives me just cause for fears on this subject. It is already too long a time since I heard from him. It does not even appear that Haider Ali Khan has made the slightest reference about it to M. Russel, who commands a French party in his service. The letters written by this officer here and those of our Waquil do not say a word about it, which conduct is just in keeping with the character of Haider Ali Khan who wants to see what we are at and who is waiting only for the favourable moment to burst out. I am thus hindered in my principal operations, the only ones to which I had to pay particular attention in the beginning.

In the course of my negotiations with Haider Ali Khan, should I speak to him about M. St. Lubin, or should I not speak to him? Silence on my part on such a delicate point, which touches him so closely, can only augment his suspicions. If I speak to him about it, what shall I say to him? That the treaty of alliance made by M. St. Lubin concerns only the English and is not at all against him? But if this treaty has been concluded, signed and sworn, the odds are that Haider Ali Khan has a copy of it. It states, according to the letter of M. de St. Lubin, that the Marathas will furnish us succour against any enemy and the condition ought to be reciprocal. Besides, either this alliance is a mere chimera or that it must be followed by a dispatch of French troops in the service of the Marathas in case they are attacked by the English. *It is precisely where I catch you*

out, will say Haider Ali Khan. What ! We have agreed that we should act in concert in all our operations; you already knew that I was at war with the Marathas; in spite of that, without informing me, without consulting me, you make a treaty of alliance with them which enables them to have a body of French troops to act against me, for, even supposing that your troops in their service are employed only against the English, is it not still acting indirectly against my interests, since the Marathas are my enemies?

That would indeed be an opportunity to start the negotiation, the success of which is such a pressing need, namely restoration of peace between the Marathas and Haider Ali Khan. But when I would offer myself as a mediator to Haider Ali Khan, how shall I conduct this affair in the present circumstances? Your intention is certainly not, my Lord, that I should be at the disposal of M. de St. Lubin. On the other hand, it is also quite clear from the way he writes to me that he considers himself as absolutely independent and at least as my equal. He claims that I must communicate with the Marathas through him alone. In that case, that is an end of it; I shall never undertake a negotiation which I shall not be entirely free to conduct to success. You will admit, my Lord, that my position is very awkward. I thought that in coming to India in the capacity of Commandant General, I would not find in my way any Frenchman who could thwart me. Here is, however, one who, although denuded of reputation among us as well as among the foreigners, European or Indian, can, if he thinks it fit, stop and upset all my operations, and that because he knew how to take a great merit to himself for the knowledge he acquired in India by means of different roles which he played and which are anything but to his advantage But never mind that, it is the freedom to act that I demand. I thought that for the success of the affairs of the nation in a country as distant, every transaction should be conducted by a single person. All that I observe increasingly confirms me in it. If it is otherwise, I am no more Commandant General, and you will permit me, my Lord, to point out to you that I cannot be responsible for events.

As for what M. de St. Lubin says about trade opened at Chaul, it can certainly be an advantage, but I find very little inclination among the traders here to take advantage of this opening all the less as some individuals have had intimation from Goa that goods sold at Chaul this year

have not brought more profits than similar goods sold at Surat or at Bombay. I have communicated to M. Chevalier of Bengal what M. de St. Lubin writes to me on this subject.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

BELLECOMBE

C^2 148, f. 273-274 v°

Colonies Duplicate:

India Office

M. de Bellecombe

No. 160 Pondicherry, 12th November 1777

About the copy of the letter from the Maratha Chief in reply to the notification of his arrival in India and of that of one of his confidants Madhavrao Sadashiv: anxiety by the strange contrast between these two letters and that of M. de St. Lubin.

My Lord,

I have at last received the reply from the Maratha Chief to the letter I had written to him to announce my arrival. It reached me two days after the departure of l'Arcangel by the same channel which I had used to write to him.

It will appear to you, my Lord, as strange as to me that this letter, of which I attach herewith a copy, does not make any mention of St. Lubin. It does not say a word of it. It is only in the letter of one by name Madhavrao Sadashiv, one of the persons in the confidence of the Maratha Chief that I get news casually of his arrival at the Court of Poona with the letters from the King and the Minister. This reticence about a man who appears in such a public capacity surprises me and causes me anxiety. It contrasts in the most striking manner with what M. St. Lubin has written to me about the importance of the treaty which, as he says, he has concluded with the Marathas and of which the Chief

should have quite naturally given me advice. Another obvious contradiction is that this letter has been sent to me by men who, according to M. St. Lubin, are not trusted at the Court of Poona, the same, however, who served us in the negotiations which were initiated by M. Law and of which M. Beyliè has given you an account. I admit to you, my Lord, I am overwhelmed with doubts which I cannot throw off. There is every reason to believe that I am imposed upon either by this letter or by that of M. St. Lubin; I cannot say by which of the two. Granting that, that of the Marathas was a forged letter, it is not worded as it ought to be, if the English had dictated it. They would not have failed to speak of M. St. Lubin therein to contrive to leave me in the lurch about the reply which I would have had to give to it. It is not less unusual admitting it to be genuine. It is indeed an enigma which can be solved only on the arrival of the envoys who are announced to me. You can imagine, my Lord, that after such a conjuction of unusualness, I shall be very reserved with them until I am assured about the genuineness of their mission, for at the present moment I am at a loss what to think of it.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

BELLECOMBE

C² 148, f. 275-275 v°

Copy of the letter from the Maratha Chief, Madhavrao Narain, to M. de Bellecombe, received on 27th October 1777

The letter which you have been pleased to write to me has increased my joy. You announce to me that the King has appointed you as Governor of Pondicherry, that this Monarch is full of wit, bravery, kindness, and endowed with all the qualities which make a great King; that you have the most ardent desire to establish friendship with us, and that consequently, you request me to indicate to you some trustworthy person

capable of negotiating matters which will tend to consolidate the foundations of our friendship. All that has given me the greatest pleasure, because for a very long time my illustrious ancestors have had with the King of France most intimate ties. Today that you have announced to me your arrival, it is my duty and my interest to establish a close correspondence between us. I consider you as my second self, as a support of my lasting happiness. I have in the past sent letters to the King of France through M. Beylié to which I am sure you will receive a reply. Kindly forward it to me. You will hear many things from the estimable Madhavrao Sadashiv, who enjoys my confidence. He sends you some trustworthy person and soon I shall myself dispatch to you one of the reliable persons of my Court capable of negotiating with you. Communicate to Madhavrao your views. He will forward them to me. Your arrival at Pondicherry gives me great pleasure and I expect many good things from it. Do continue to wish for the augmentation of our friendship and let me have the pleasure of hearing from you. I have only to wish you happy days.

True Copy : BELLECOMBE

C^2 157, f. 55-61

Colonies

Department of India

M. de Bellecombe — Pondicherry, 5th February 1778

No. 190

Political

My Lord,

It is hardly possible to trace for you an accurate faithful picture of the political affairs of the Princes of Hindustan which constantly changes. However, the gazettes are always full of them. I could write to you volumes of them if I could rely on a heap of adventurers spread in the land who have so far been gossips and schemers, who have not acted and will never act but because of their private interests which are often not connected with that of the Nation. Our finances do not permit us to maintain in the different Courts of the Princes and with the various

European nations, persons capable of supplying us useful and accurate information, for, I think that all the news that is supplied to us can hardly be relied upon.

Bengal

M. Chevalier, no doubt, must be giving you, my Lord, from Bengal an account of the different movements and of the successes of the armies of the Mughal Emperor, of the Scints or Seystes,[21] Jats, Rohillas, Pathans, Marathas, and of the different Nababs and Rajas dependent on this Empire who are under arms, and of the whole politics of the Supreme Council of Calcutta, etc. I think it useless, my Lord, to repeat what he has written to you, all the more as in the position in which we are here, it becomes almost immaterial, since we have no weight with the Princes of Asia. He must have also informed you of the arrangements which he has made for the execution of the mission with which you have specially charged him, as well as of the difficulties he has met with from the sub-pay-commissioner to obtain funds necessary for the purpose. I have written to him to execute your orders. According to what he points out to me in his latest letters, he is fitting out a small boat which he purchased on the account of the King and of which he has entrusted the command to M. de Bloticrs. But I am very much afraid that all the secret may be divulged as a result of the altercations which he had to obtain the necessary funds for this expedition. No doubt, he could not do otherwise.

I have already addressed you a special letter in which is enclosed a copy of the one which M. Chevalier had written to me on this project along with the reply I gave him. He has written to me a little more in detail in the last letter which I received from him on this subject.

According to the report of M. Chevalier, the Council of Calcutta has received orders from Europe, to continue the conquests begun in the Gulf of Cambay and even (the march) on Poona. It appears that the movements have already started in this part and that preparations are afoot to dispatch forces from Bengal and from this Coast to Bombay.

M. Panon, Chief of the Lodge of Patna, informs me that the Council of Calcutta, by a fresh stroke of its politics, has recently concluded an agreement by which it controls the forces and the revenues of the Vazir Asaf-ud-daula. The regular troops of this Nabab, fixed at 24,000 men,

including the artillery and a corp of 400 cavalry, are commanded, trained and disciplined by 103 English officers. A collector has been appointed for his domains to ensure the subsistence of the troops and the payment of his dues to the English Government. Thus, one more Prince has come under the protection, and additional 24,000 men stand at the disposal of the Council of Calcutta in a territory which almost adjoins Delhi. On account of these new forces and because of their fear of a European war, I hear that they have recalled to Calcutta all the white troops which they had stationed in the upper Ganges.

Malabar Coast

The latest news I have received from M. Picot on the political situation of the Malabar Coast is not so comprehensive as that of M. Chevalier. He only announces that the mission of M. de St. Lubin no longer appears to engage the attention of the English, that there has been division among the Frenchmen who were in Poona, that the ship Le Sartine will not make profitable voyage, that finally, he is informed by a letter from Bombay that Captain Couronnat is detained as a prisoner by the Marathas and that they are demanding two lacks of Roupies as his ransom. All this report gives me only an imperfect idea. I cannot, therefore, indulge in any reflexions. I am dispatching to M. Beaudouin the duplicate of the letter of M. Picot on this subject and papers accompanying it. The ship Le Sartine arrived here on the 15th of the last month; it came from Malaya where it was obliged to spend the monsoon because it missed its voyage to China. It had left the Malabar Coast too late.

I have already written to you, my Lord, about the Austrian ship which arrived in these parts, commanded by M. Bolts, an Englishman, formerly an employee at Calcutta. So far he only appears to be a merchant charged with a commercial operation on the Malabar Coast. He first went to Surat. As he had a bad reception in this place because of the English, he proceeded with his ship to Gogha, further north on the opposite coast of the Gulf of Cambay, and is trying to obtain this place or some other, to set up an establishment there. For this purpose he went alone to Poona. M. Rians, his partner, died at Madras. It is said that during this year he will receive two ships which must have left the port of Ostend.

Haider Ali Khan

This conqueror becomes more and more powerful day by day. A year ago a league was formed against him: the Marathas, Nizamali and his brother Bassalat Jang were to join hands to crush him; their plan was to unite all their forces and act together, but his politics and his money, which he knows how to spread on these occasions, have so far prevented their union. Nizam Ali's general was the first to advance last year with 54,000 men; he had made some ravages in the territory of Haider Ali Khan, who marched against him by forced marches. When he was just 20 leagues from the enemy, he selected sixteen thousand men from among his best troops to attack him. When Ibrahim Khan,[22] Nizamali's General, received news of it, he had no other alternative but to retire into the Kingdom of his Prince. Since then, the Marathas under the command of General Phadke came with the intention of helping a Raja of their dependency, who was attacked in his capital [23] by Haider Ali Khan. I have just received the news and he himself informs me that he has forced his enemies to retire with a loss after crossing a river; he pursued them with a body of 15,000 cavalry and he pushed forward as far as the kingdom of Bassalat Jang which he forbade his troops to plunder.

These successes are due to the superiority of his troops, to his valour and to his money. He has seized considerable treasures, but he uses them only to create divisions among his enemies. He avoids committing himself with the English whom he does not like, but whom he fears, although he does not want to admit it. He expends as much as he can on territories which do not adjoin those of this power, and he is convinced that when he possesses a large portion of the territory, of the plains, the Europeans cannot attack him; that he will be in a position to prevent them from doing so by the number of his cavalry. It is very probable that he has negotiated with the English for uniting with them against the Marathas of Poona who obstruct him in his plans of aggrandizement. Once his object is fulfilled, it can be confidently said that if he finds us in full strength, he will willingly form a union with us and humble the English power which obstructs him, not less than the Marathas, in the designs he may have on the Carnatic. We ought to humour him, because the establishment of Mahé can maintain itself in its state of weakness only by the protection he gives it. All the petty Nair Princes will not

dare budge so long as this conqueror governs their territory. But I think it absolutely necessary to put this place in a state of defence against the Nairs, if a change took place in the fortune of Haider Ali Khan, or if he declares against us.

Coromandel

I have already informed you, my Lord, in my letter No. 169 that M. Duplessis had proceeded from Shrirangpattan to the camp of Haider Ali Khan and that, without my order, he had concluded there with this Prince, a treaty which I disapproved, because it was not acceptable. I am also dispatching to M. Baudouin all the correspondence of this officer along with the documents relating to his treaty. You will see therein that he tried to please this Nabab by a bargain and hoped to receive two lacks of Rupees which he had asked for, but Haider Ali Khan had taken the precaution so that this officer should not lay hands on the funds and that I should be made responsible for this treaty. This lesson will put me on my guard against the chocie of those whom I shall be obliged to send to the courts of the native Princes. The majority of those who visit the Darbars get over-excited and they always speak of making the greatest revolutions in India and re-establishing the nation on a footing of glory and splendour such as it had never enjoyed. I am now accustomed to this style and I set it at its true value. Haider Ali Khan writes to me that after my representations, he gave permission to M. Duplessis to return to Mahé, but he does not refer to the treaty which I proposed to him. As this Nabab persistently asks me for an officer to replace M. Russel, who, in his turn, is no more anxious to serve this Prince, I am taking with me to Mahé M. de Puimorin, Chevalier de St. Louis and shall put him in place of M. Russel. He is the most suitable person I can find here; he has served among the troops in India with distinction. I enclose with this letter a list of the services of this officer.

Coromandel Coast

Tranquillity continues to reign on this Coast. The English have recently sent an order to all the officers to return to their posts. There daily pass in this town a number of them to whom I offer courtesy. Muhammad Ali Khan has just made an agreement with his creditors to discharge his debts from a portion of the revenues of the Carnatic and of Tanjaour if it is given to him. For a lakh of pagodas which he paid

to the Governor of Madras and another lakh to the Council, he has found means to gain time. That is all he asks. He is one of the most subtle and cleverest politicians in India.

Orissa Coast

The Orissa Coast is also very quiet. Several Rajas have written to me and sent me confidential persons to confer with me secretly. They earnestly desire that we could balance the power of the English so that they would cease to be so tyrannized as they are. I maintain their good will and can only offer promises.

Different Coasts

News is spread that the English are preparing for a war with us, a war which is declared in Europe. I do not believe a word of it, for, I am sure, my Lord, that if this event were imminent, you would have sent me orders and intimation. I can never believe that a colony and establishments, of which the safety is entrusted to your care, could be left in total oblivion and abandonment.

It is with this confidence that I decide to undertake a voyage to Mahé to see what measures can be taken for the protection of this establishment as well as to establish order in the different branches of the service, to apply the regulations of current administration, to stop the bickerings which are always a subject of voluminous correspondence, to have better acquaintance with Haider Ali Khan whose conduct is impenetrable and to have talk with him, if it is possible and if the report is true that he has approached his capital. I am informing him of my departure for the Malabar Coast to find out if he can approach Mahé or one of his posts, so that I can meet him and have parleys with him without the help of a native interpreter. For this purpose, I am taking with me M. Léger who speaks Persian. For, I think that to be interpreted by a man who understands you is very different from having the translation made by two or three persons who often hardly understand you and who give to your ideas such an extraneous turn that it is almost impossible to admit its truthfulness. This is, my Lord, the occasion to impress upon you the necessity to have linguists who could be employed as the case may require. If the authorities continue to show interest in India, they must think of training men who know the languages of this country, especially, Urdu, Persian and Marathi.

You will see, Sir, from this resumè of the situation of this country that there are always big movements going on, that the English play therein the principal role, that we stand for nothing therein because of our weakness, and that finally, for having no hand therein, we spend much, without having any means, without any measures taken to be somebody there. We must begin by making preparations or else develop a system of economy (as I said it in one of my letters marked " Artillery ") whereby we shall maintain here only a small number of men to keep order and continue the trade just as it stands by submitting to all the consequences and vicissitudes resulting therefrom. For, if we wish to act offensively in this part, we must, I shall always repeat it, employ major forces from the beginning and if war is imminent, I fear we may not have time to establish a base of operations, because we shall be destitute of everything. That is what you must have seen, my Lord, from the details of all my letters and from the tableau of the comparison of our position with that of the English, enclosed in my letter of 27th June No. 74.

I am not speaking as an interested person, for my health is so broken that I am not looking forward to play any part in the revolution. I had pointed out to you, my Lord, that I could no longer stand the strain in this country. Permit me to repeat to you my entreaties to kindly obtain from the King the permission to return to France. During my stay here, I shall truthfully continue to give an account of the affairs from the most sincere point of view so that you could have an exact information about a region which concerns you and which is so far away. It is my duty and I make it a point to do so. My only desire is to work for the public weal and to see that it is done. If my strength does not permit me to work for the execution of your projects, it will always be a satisfaction for me if the accounts I shall submit to you could serve to form a basis for them.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

BELLECOMBE

C² 157, f. 71-76
Colonies
Department of India
M. de Bellecombe
No. 193.
Political

Duplicate
Pondicherry, 5th June 1778

My Lord,

There is nothing as astonishingly kaleidoscopic as the picture of the political revolutions in India, such as it was at the time of my letter No. 190. Haider Ali Khan was opposed by the combined forces of the Marathas, of Nizam Ali and of Bassalat Jang, and if the union of these three powers had not yet actually materialized, it is none the less true that it was their common desire. Haider Ali Khan would have needed his political talents and resources to shake it off by creating divisions among them. The unmistakable luck, which appears to follow him in his operations, has served him beyond his hopes. The Marathas were obliged to cry off, a fresh revolution in their government pre-occupies them and their general Haripant Phadke who commanded a corps of large cavalry was recalled to Poona which, at this moment, appears to be threatened by the English.

Raghunathrao, who had taken shelter with them at Bombay, had always managed to win over some followers in the Regency and it is they who recently decided upon his recall to entrust to him the reins of government. He was consequently invited to proceed to Poona. Whether it was legitimate mistrust on his part, or gratitude or attachment for the English or perhaps the effect of their intrigues, he wanted to be escorted there by a detachment of this nation to be composed of 500 Europeans and 2,000 sipahees from the garrison of Bombay. The Regency, informed of these preparations, sensing the danger which it clearly ran, if once the English set their feet in Poona, sent word to Raghunathrao that it invited him to come and take over the administration of affairs, but that it did not wish to accept foreign masters; that he could come alone, and that it was their desire to receive him with all possible alacrity. As for the English, they were not welcome. And at once all the bodies of Marathas, who were away from home, had orders to retire to Poona. The English, who had made all the preparations at Bombay for this expedition and who did not expect to find obstacles, thought they

ought to suspend it. Either they hope to be able to change the mood of the Regency, or they are awaiting the favourable moment to prepare for means which would assure them success. There is indeed a report that they propose to attempt it by force and that they are going to order troops from Bengal and from the Coromandel Coast who will join these forces from Bombay at an agreed meeting-place to march on Poona and have Raghunathrao, their protègè, recognized in the capacity of the chief of the Maratha power. They have on doubt struck their deal with him and besides, if they succeed in installing him, they will seek means to keep him under their control like all the Princes to whom they declared themselves as their protectors to turn them more easily into their slaves.

I find it very hard to believe, my Lord, that this expedition will take place. The English would have to withdraw large garrisons and I doubt if they would expose themselves in such a manner especially in the present circumstances when they appear to be worried about the affairs in Europe. Perhaps indeed their delay indicates that they are waiting for the news to find out if they can count on the continuation of peace about which they are at this moment uncertain. Their anxiety is obvious. My voyage to the Malabar Coast caused them much alarm. They feared that it was a concerted project to fall on Bombay with forces which would have come from the Isle of France to join me at Mahé. The movements of the squadron which they had in this part confirm me in this opinion. Having met in the North of Mahé the ship Le Brillant which I had instructed to sail up to Goa to, really speaking, show in these seas the Royal flag, it (the English squadron) constantly observed it (the French ship Le Brillant) for several days and quitted the Malabar Coast only when they were assured at Bombay that there was no cause for any fear. The unfavourable news thay have just received about their affairs in America leads me to think that they will be more than ever on their guard. I ardently wish that the precautions, which they think they ought to take for the safety of their establishments, prevent the execution of a project, the success of which would procure them the greatest advantages and almost deprive us of any hope of forming an alliance which must always be included in our political combinations for India.

I cannot tell you anything positive, my Lord, on the subject of M. St. Lubin. I have received letters from which it appears that a part of the guard of honour, which had been given to him, has been removed

and that he hasn't even much liberty to move out. A man whom I had secretly sent to Poona has reported to me that at the time he was there, M. de St. Lubin did not seem to have great credit and that he lived very much in seclusion. He had left the place before the revolution, but it was much talked of before his departure.

I fail to understand the conduct of Haiderali Khan in this revolution. At present he appears to make common cause with the English by favouring the designs of Raghunathrao whom he wants, as he has notified to me, to put in possession of the Maratha Government. I do not see what can be his object in this policy. It is certain that if Raghunathrao is installed at Poona by the English, they will derive from it greater advantage than Haiderali Khan who will have seconded them by remaining quiet when he could have opposed their designs and perhaps wrecked them. Is it on his part consideration for the English or fear? That is what I cannot say. Perhaps it is both. He seems to think only of the present moment, and whilst the Marathas, preoccupied with their troubles, leave him undisturbed, he beguiles his time capturing places from them. The lack of combinations for certain but distant interests is a general vice of all the Indian governments. They do not know how to make momentary sacrifices, and Haiderali Khan, more than any one else, does not wish to defer the moment to enjoy success. This policy which he upholds sometimes creates doubts about his dispositions and his attachment for us. However, I continue to look upon him as one on whom we ought to rely the most, and either in regard to him or to his successors, I think that the least I can do is to maintain and augment the party which we have in his service. He may die at any time, and his death will occasion divisions in his family. Tipu Sahib, elder of his sons, has always shown greatest attachment for the nation. The French detachment, if it is in a certain strength, would at once assure him the entire enheritance of his father and the nation would derive from it the greatest advantages. The cession of Mangalore would be the first demand that we should make, and I am certain it would be granted to us.

Bassalat Jang

This prince whom I had sounded on his dispositions for a settlement with Haiderali Khan, as I saw him today relieved of the Marathas and

fearing that he might wish to harass him (Bassalat Jang) for having joined the league, wrote to me and asked M. Lalée, Chief of his (Swiss) party, to write to me, that he would gladly enter into a negotiation with this Nawab, but I think that the latter is too well aware of the advantage of his position to renounce it by any treaty. However, when Bassalat Jang acquaints me of his intentions in greater details, I shall see if there is any means of getting them accepted.

Nizamali

The dispatch of the man, who had come to meet me on his behalf, has had no sequal. He would like to get succour presently; it was realised that we were not in a position to do so. The envoy has asked for leave to depart and I shall permit him to do so. I would have, however, wished that he had seen some ships arrive from Europe with troops before his departure. That would have been a means to inspire confidence and fortify the dispositions which I suppose I perceive in Nizamali as well as in all the other Indian Princes to shake off the yoke which has been hanging heavy over them for so long.

Bengal

M. Chevalier had occasions to directly inform you of the political situation of Bengal. I notice in all his letters vast projects, but which, in my opinion, are all lacking in soundness, because M. Chevalier always forgets that the troops which he demands cannot be carried as in the air, either to Poona or to Delhi. He has recently forwarded to me a letter from General Najaf Khan who appears to be yearning for the arrival of our forces, and another very pressing from a chief who offers to join us as soon as we appear in Bengal, but I think that these two letters are the result of hopes, which have perhaps been too lightly raised in them, that they will see us arrive with large forces.

I see, my Lord, from a letter from M. De La Brillane[24] that M. Chevalier has asked from him, men, guns, muskets and munitions of war for the native princes. I do not know if you have authorized M. Chevalier to make this demand and M. De La Brillane to comply with it. It has been made without my consent, and if it had yours, my Lord, I cannot help expressing to you my surprise to see that such demands, which may have most serious consequences, should be made without either advising or informing the Commandant-General.

Coromandel Coast

On this Coast, everything is quite tranquil. Muhammad Ali Khan, always under the tutelage of the English, spreads lot of money to win over the Council of Madras so as to evade the execution of the orders from the Court of London which expressly enjoins the entire restoration of Tanjaour to its Raja. He has so far succeeded and prevailed upon Mr. Rumbold [25] to await fresh orders. The English profit by the moment when they hold him under their domination to derive from it the concessions which they hope to obtain.

Candy

The proposals of the King of Candy are no longer doubtful. The man, whom I had dispatched, proceeded as far as Candy and he returned with the agents of this Prince who always appears to be most favourably disposed towards us, as I shall have the honour to give you a special account of it.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

BELLECOMBE

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I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

Bellecombe

M. Picot de la Motte

French Commandant at Mahe

1765 – 1779

C^2 121, f. 20-21 v°

Extract from the letter written by M. Picot to M. Law

Mahé, 31st December, 1771

Sir,

It appears certain that the Marathas have their designs on the Malabar Coast. Their agent pursues his negotiations and announces the impending arrival of the land forces and the fleet. The question is to find a suitable passage for the former, but as he confesses, this operation is difficult to be carried out through the Canara territory; he throws out a hint that the passage will be made through the kingdom of Coorg and declares that the sovereign has given his consent to it. Chirakkal asked this agent what the goal of his nation was and the latter replied that the plan was to enter the Coromandel Coast through the south [26], and that if the circumstances permitted, they would avail of this opportunity to restore all the Princes of Malabar, who have been dethroned, to their rights, if they agreed to join their (Maratha) forces. Chirakkal wanted to know if his kingdom would be simply restored to him while leaving Ali Raja undisturbed in his original domains. The envoy said that there was no intention to expel the Muhammedan Chief from Cannanore. This reply does not satisfy Chirakkal. Ali Raja has always taken the precaution to keep his men around him, and it is, I think, the real motive which has dissuaded him from his designs on the Maldives.

For the sake of our tranquillity, I wish the Marathas do not enter the Malabar. Our situation does not permit us to face such an invasion without risks, for, even if the land forces did not approach the colony, we shall always be very much disturbed by the fleet, which will probably remain in our neighbourhood for a long time. If that happens, I shall be in a very embarrassing situation, in view of our weak condition and our destitution. But what worries me most is to know what attitude I should adopt. We are, as a matter of fact, forced to observe neutrality, but after all, are we at war or at peace with the Marathas? Their fleet has actually attacked our ships, but then, it was equipped, armed and commanded by a Corsair who is a tributary (of the Maratha Government). Last year, this chief did not participate and the fleet, thus presumed to be national, was solely engaged in the attack of Opire and did not, it appears to me,

try to practise piracy; at least no occasion presented itself for that. If, during this dry-monsoon, this fleet operates on the same system, how should I conduct myself? There is reason to suppose that they will throw the blame for the hostilities against us on the particular chief, who is no more in command, and ask me, as an ally, for a supply of water, etc. Shall I furnish it? By doing so, we shall perhaps win a friend subsequently, without committing a breach of faith towards the Malabar Princes. But would it not be also dishonouring our flag by not expressing any resentment for the past insults? On the other hand, to refuse would be to provoke them and expose all our ships. I beg you, therefore, Sir, to give me your orders and in cipher, for fear of interception. The most fortunate thing I can wish for is that they should hold us in so much contempt as not to condescend to address us, and that we should be left alone at Mahé as if we did not exist. I cannot entertain such hopes, for I am sure that if this expedition really comes about, our Malabarees will compromise us in spite of us, which is characteristic of them. How much is it to be regretted that such a revolution should take place at a time when, whatever conduct we may adopt, not only do we run the risk of losing everything, but also of dishonouring ourselves!

I am etc.

The Supreme Council's reply to M. Picot

Pondicherry, 21st January, 1772

Sir,

M. Law has communicated to us the contents of your letter of 31st December 1771, by which you acquaint him with the new embarrassing situation to which you will be exposed because of the vicinity of the Maratha fleet and army. You desire that we should reply to it in consultation. This letter contains our reflexions on the present state of affairs and on the course you should follow.

In the state of weakness in which you are at Mahé, surrounded by numerous petty chiefs whose interests are so diverse, neutrality is certainly the only course. But there are circumstances when this weakness itself deprives us even of the liberty to remain neutral. Such is the case, in which, it appears, you will find yourself, since the Marathas, with

a large army and fleet, can always force you to adopt a course at their choice. This power, Sir, the most formidable and most solidly established in the whole of India, requires most tactful handling. And on the question, whether to have it for us or against us, there is no room for hesitation. If therefore the commandant asked you for supplies of water, wood, etc., we think that you ought to furnish him all that you cannot refuse without fear of displeasing him. It would be inopportune to express resentment for what happened in the past in connection with our ships, all the more since the Marathas appear to throw the blame for this brigandage on the pirate chief whom they disown. M. Law, in his turn, expects to write to Madhavrao requesting him to give orders so that our establishments and our ships on the Malabar Coast are no longer exposed to the attacks of the pirates. We shall add that by providing to the fleet the succours which will be demanded from you, you will be dealing directly with the Marathas with whom we are at peace, and that the honour of the nation cannot be compromised by this action. But while accepting their demands, we feel sure that you will not neglect any precautions which the security of your colony necessitates. One such, for example, will be never to furnish them at a time a sufficiently large number of casks (nun-buoys) to instil in them the idea of a surprise attack on Mahé. On this point, we rely, Sir, on your prudence and the knowledge you have of the genius of this nation.

I am, etc.

Note.—Before the receipt of the above-mentioned letter, M. Picot had an occasion to write the following to M. Law.

Extract from the letter written by M. Picot to M. Law

Mahé, 26th January, 1772

Sir,

I enclose herewith the duplicate of my last letter of the 31st December (1771). The Maratha agent has crossed over to the North again, and as the dry-monsoon is far advanced, I hope that no operation (on this side) will be carried into effect. The English also appear to me to think likewise, and I am really speaking delighted at this delay which will give me time to breathe.

In spite of the apparent tranquillity which we enjoy, our garrison continues to remain too small, and is breaking up day by day, so that the place cannot be considered to be in a safe position. That is why I request you, Sir, not to forget the promise you were kind enough to give me to send us troops, and to avail of the earliest occasion, even of the foreign ships. We particularly need a good artillery officer, for this branch is too weak here. Since the transport of the guns is impossible at the moment, try at least to send us mortars. They would be very useful to us, if unfortunately we were constrained to take refuge in the fort, from which we cannot move out. And there are in this colony spots in which our guns cannot appear and from which mere shells could oust the enemy before whom we are not in a position to appear in the open. Besides, this instrument is so formidable for the Malabaree that its very sight can impose upon him.

I am, etc.

PICOT

C^2 128, f. 118-120 v°

His Lordship De Boynes,

Minister and Secretary of State for the Navy, at the Court

Mahé, 28th February 1773

Pirates (No. 4) (Duplicate)

My Lord,

After discussing in my two previous letters about the enemies whom we have to fear from land, I shall recall the risks which we have to run from the sea for the colony as well as for the ships which sail in our neighbourhood.

There are in the north of this Coast, different pirate nations which are spread over the whole length of it and which interrupt trade as soon as the monsoon opens. From September and October, we notice brigands who cruise with very light small boats and carry away indigenous crafts, but they are quite innocuous so far as ships are concerned.

The Maratha fleet is the one which affects us the most. It starts from ports to the North of Goa, and its actual force consits of 4 or 5 pals with 3 masts of which the biggest carries 22 guns; 9 to 10 pals with 2 masts of 8 to 16 guns and about 30 pals of 2, 4 and 8 guns. At first sight, this fleet appears formidable, but it is not so dangerous as it is reported to be. Any ship well armed and showing a bold front has certainly nothing to fear. We have had experience of it. The Marathas are not so well-trained in navigation; they have neither discipline nor battle order; their artillery is not well served, and they can have real advantage only in calm weather because of the agility of their boats which employ oars with the help of which they regulate their boarding. The number of the crew which this fleet carries ought not to create any terror; they are all men, without pay and not so well armed, who display courage only against those who flee before them. Pillage alone animates these pirates, but as soon as they see a little resistance, they give up the attempt. And moreover, the chiefs, whose sole property is their boats, fear risking them before the fire of a ship which has a strong artillery and whose capture even does not appear to compensate them for the damages they might have suffered. For, such a ship cannot be captured without first being rendered unfit to serve. The Marathas sell their prizes and certainly they will never get a good price for a ship which has suffered damage while offering a stiff resistance.

However, it is not prudent for any of our ships to appear in our regions without being equipped with at least 30 guns, of which several 12 pounders, and 150 to 200 crew. Thus armed, it can sail in safety over all this portion of the peninsula. We have had experience that all the expeditions made on this principle have never suffered any misfortune. The King's frigate la Belle Poule is actually on this Coast and certainly all the Marathas combined can never interrupt its voyage. But a merchant ship, for which any fight is onerous, will always feel reluctant to take risks involving great costs. Thus, it appears that the trade on the Malabar Coast will languish until our approaches are purged of robbers who infest them.

Two frigates of the King, similar to la Belle Poule, will be more than sufficient to protect all our merchants. But it would perhaps be more advantageous to sail up to the source of the trouble and destroy these pirates in their den. The English did it very easily in 1755 [27]. This expedition

would cost less than the expenses of continuously maintaining coast-guards which in the long run would involve lot of expenditure. If France needs a port in India, those of these pirates appear suitable. But if we are to remain content with humbling the strength of the Marathas, it would be better, after the attack, to force them to respect the French flag by a treaty and leave them free to deal with the other nations as they like. By destroying them, we shall be working for every one; whereas by forcing them only not to pirate against us we shall procure the safety of our navigation which would enable us to support and even win the competition with the Portuguese, the Dutch and the Danes. The English have resorted to this course from which they are deriving such great benefit. As for the petty robbers, it is impossible to attack them and negotiate with them. They belong to a number of different small chiefs who take refuge in small unknown rivers. And, in their case, there is no alternative other than the defensive for boats which apprehend danger from them.

As soon as a ship is in our roadstead, it has continuously to be occupied with preparations for resistance, which distracts its attention from its trade. It cannot go in search of merchandise in the different ports of the North or of the South, and is forced to incur expenses for the transport on indigenous boats, so that a cargo cannot be formed without much cost. Besides, we must share our garrison with it, which forces us ourselves to be in a state of defence and exposes us to attacks from the land, being stripped of the major part of our soldiers. This awkward situation often lasts from November to March. It is thus essential to think of remedying it so that our trace is established on a sound footing and prospers.

These risks from the sea are obvious for the ships. But as, besides, the Marathas are accustomed to make a descent in places which they think are not properly guarded, they can also try an attack against us whose awkward situation they know. We are actually so poor that they probably do not care to think of it. But as I have said, while speaking of the weakness of our garrison, if ever they see that we possess money or precious goods, they are in a position to succeed if they undertake any enterprise against us because of their big number.

I must point out that the English, in virtue of their alliance with the Marathas, furnish water and wood to their fleet at Mt. Delly, which

circumstance enables them to prolong its cruises in this part of the Coast where it would sojourn for a much shorter duration if it weie deprived of this succour. If we could induce the English to renounce this practice, we would obtain much advantage from it for our trade which would thus become free.

I am very respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

PICOT

C² 151, f. 26-26 v°

My Lord De Sartine at Court.

Mahè, 18th September 1777

Duplicate

My Lord,

I received the letter which you wrote to me on the 1st of March and which accompanied the Bill of Exchange for Rs. 12,000 (Bombay) on Mr. W. Cockburn, passed to my order by M. le Ray de Chaumont. I am actually sending it to Mr. David Scott, accredited merchant at Bombay. I charge him with presenting it and receiving the payment at maturity.

I do not know how to forward this sum to the person for whom it is meant. I have absolutely not received any letter from him since his departure from this place. As I suppose that he may be in need of money, I divide into two the amount I shall receive from Bombay; one half will be dispatched to me here and the other to M. Anquetil, Consul at Surat, whom I shall inform of the intended purpose. Through this arrangement, this person will surely get in time the money he needs. I am risking a letter to inform him about my proceeding.

The reports which have spread here and which emanate from the English say that the ship is still in the same port, that it has lost a part

of its crew through desertion[28] and that they refused at Bombay to negotiate with the officer who went there in a dinghy. The person in question had a good reception in the capital where he first proceeded. He returned from there, but it is reported that nothing could be concluded in the absence of sufficient powers. I cannot vouch for anything to you, my Lord, on all these reports, but I thought it my duty to submit to you an account of the rumours.

I am very respectfully,

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

PICOT

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M. Lagrene de Meziere

Second-in-command at Pondicherry

1768 – 1778

C[2] 123, f. 06-12

Pondicherry, 19th February, 1772

To

The Controller-General.

My Lord,

Allow me to give you the sequence of the political events which I had the honour to communicate to you in my letter of 10th October of the last year.

The Marathas started their campaign against Mysore in the beginning of December, that is to say, as soon as the rains ceased. They tighten, to the utmost possible extent, the blocus of the towns of Bangalore, Srirangapattan and some other places, but they cannot force Haider Ali Khan to submit. Tranquil in his capital which is furnished with victual, artillery and provisions of war for several years and possessing other small fortresses, he is confident of tiring out the patience of the Marathas. The latter, masters of the whole country side, encourage the people to cultivate it and protect them as if they were under their domination. About two months ago, they detached from the army facing Srirangapattan seven to eight thousand cavalry who seized the Ghats, i.e. the passes in the mountains which separate the Carnatic from Mysore. From there they sent their Vakils to Madras to summon the English and Muhammad Ali Khan to furnish them the necessary succour for the siege of Bangalore and Srirangapattan or pay them the Chauth or Chauthai due for more than twenty years, that is to say one-third [29] of the revenues of the province of Arcot, demands which they have been addressing for a long time. But apparently to induce the English and Muhammad Ali Khan to comply more promptly, they have resorted to some pillaging in the territory, 60 to 80 kilometres from this town, which is estimated at two to three hundred thousand rupees. Negotiations began on both sides; the English who seem to gain time, reply to the Marathas that they cannot take any decisions on their own responsibility without orders from their Company. However, it is reported that they have paid or have got Muhammad Ali Khan to pay five to six hundred thousand rupees to the Marathas to avoid the devastation of the territories in which rice and other cereals are being harvested just now.

What is certain, my Lord, is that evidently the English are protecting Haider Ali Khan secretly. Twc reasons lead them to do so:

1. It is known beyond doubt that this Nawab pays to the Governor and to the leading Englishmen of Madras annual sums estimated at four to five hundred thousand rupees.

2. It is not at all in the interest of the English nation to allow the Marathas to add to their dominions the kingdoms of Mysore and Canara, as I had the honour to point out to you by my letter of 10th October 1771. This would augment the power of the Marathas who sooner or later would invade the Carnatic or the best part of it, or finally try to deliver Muhammad Ali Khan from the yoke of the English and make him their own tributary, and thereby would restrict the latter simply to a territory around Madras. The fact cannot be ignored that the English, in the position in which they are today on this Coast (I am not speaking of Bengal), are masters of the balance of power between all the sovereigns of the Peninsula and turn it, with the highest authority, in favour of the Prince with whom they would ally themselves. Thus, they are in possession of the Empire in this part and truly reign in the name of their Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan. Their interest therefore, is in preserving this balance and they would take pretty good care not to disturb it by allying themselves with the Marathas against Haider Ali Khan[30]. This is undoubtedly the guiding principle of their actual conduct. It will vary according to the circumstances; at times they will be friends of Haider Ali Khan and at others his enemies, but in the latter case, they will form a close union with the Marathas[31].

At the same time as the latter sent their Vakils to Madras, they also dispatched their agents here to propose to us to transport to India all the troops stationed at the Isles, with a proportionate artillery train and the necessary munitions of war and join them to besiege and capture Haider Ali Khan[32]. As this would secure the peaceful possession of Mysore, they engaged to cede to us the territory situated to the East of the Ghats adjoining the Carnatic, of which the revenues are estimated at forty lakhs of rupees. M. Law will give you an account, my Lord, of the resolutions of the Political Committee on these grand proposals. I shall therefore not repeat them here. It is certain that the only means left to

the nation to lift itself from the abasement in which it has sunk in India lies in this offer of the Marathas, for these vast territories which they would cede to us, could be exchanged with Muhammad Ali Khan for others around Pondicherry, fetching a revenue of twenty lakhs of rupees. This would be to the advantage of Muhammad Ali Khan. Besides, if any difficulties arose on that point, the Marathas themselves would force Muhammad Ali Khan to accept this exchange. But the English would constitute a great obstacle in this project, for as soon as they would see us united with the Marathas against Haider Ali Khan, they would fly to his succour to save him from destruction: their political system, as I have said it, would dictate it as an absolute necessity for them. In that case, the prospects would be doubtful, and we would find ourselves involved as auxiliaries in a long war, the results of which, it appears, would only turn to the advantage of the English[31]. They have formed a militia, known as sipahees at the head of which they have attached Europeans who keep them in the strictest discipline. It is reported that they have 20,000 on this Coast and at Masulipatnam in Orissa which constitutes an army always ready to march and which is the foundation of their power in India; likewise in Bengal. We have none to oppose them and our alliance with the Marathas will not procure us any, whilst, on the contrary, the English allied with Haider Ali Khan, can also count on the Nawab's sipahees, which total more than fifteen to sixteen thousand. It would thus be almost impossible for us, as I believe it, in spite of the very large number of Maratha cavalry, to have a decided superiority over this league in case it materializes. On the other hand, it is quite certain that from the moment the Marathas would declare themselves against the English and Muhammad Ali Khan, they could deprive them of all their revenues generally by ravaging their territories, and thereby stop their trade completely. Nothing could prevent it. This would soon reduce our enemies to a trying situation, especially if two campaigns were started in this manner. We have had an experience of it from the tactics practised in this type of campaign by this very Haider Ali Khan during his war against the English in 1768 and 1769 with seven to eight thousand cavalry alone. He continuously ravaged the Carnatic and raised continuous contributions from it, so that Muhammad Ali Khan could not collect from it one-tenth of the revenues. The English were so encumbered with the expenses of this war that they borrowed money from everywhere. They got it from Bengal, and even seized upon the

funds of their merchants as bosses. This extremity forced them to accept peace which Haider Ali Khan dictated to them on the borders of Madras. From this fortunate example, why should we not hope for the same success[31]. I would have no doubts about it, my Lord, if this important operation were entrusted to M. de Bussy. His great reputation in Hindustan, the knowledge he has acquired about the genius of the Muslim Princes and especially of the Marathas during his glorious campaign in the Deccan, the celebrity of his name in India and his military talents make me feel confident that no one can fulfil this important mission in as masterly a fashion as he. To so many advantages, he adds another, not less remarkable for the success of the whole enterprise, I mean to refer to the political negotiation with the Asiatic Princes which he handled with so much mastery during the last ten years of his stay in India. What effect would this art not produce on the moods in which most of the sovereigns of this Peninsula are at present ! Nizam Ali, Subhedar of the Deccan, is only seeking the opportunity to recover the Four Circars to the North of Masulipatnam, occupied by the English, with whom almost all the Rajas are dissatisfied, because they are harassed by them. Bassalat Jang, his brother, Nawab of Adoni, who has in his service M. Gardé, called Good Natured, at the head of the corps of troops of about 400 Frenchmen, as many topazes[33] and 2,000 sipahees, cannot hold his position except with the support of this detachment and is entirely devoted to our nation. Muhammad Ali Khan, Nawab of Arcot, oppressed by the English, is only waiting for the opportunity to shake off their yoke; his dispositions, however secret they may be, are known, and we think that he would sacrifice half of his possessions to become independent. The King of Tanjaour, to be freed from his dependence on the Nawab of Arcot, would give lands, fetching two lakhs of revenues, around our factory of Karikal. He cherishes the bitterest resentment for the last levy that was demanded from him. Haider Ali Khan, whose ambition is vast, although secretly allied with the English today, is their enemy, because he considers that they alone actually and the Marathas are the obstacles in his vast projects. It is reported that he aims at invading the Carnatic and next seizing the throne of the Deccan. The Marathas, who fear the genius of Haider Ali Khan, would like to overthrow this Nawab; they equally dread his union with the English. It does not appear beyond the bounds of probability to suppose that if Haider Ali Khan and the English were

closely allied with each other, they would be in a position to attack this formidable power. You know, my Lord, that it is divided into two families, one reigns at Cuttack and the other at Poona. It is the troops of the latter who are seeking to seize Mysore and the Carnatic and who have a special interest in reducing the power of the English. They have given protection to Reza Ali Khan, son of the celebrated Chanda Sahib, late Nawab of Arcot, for whom they are determined to create a principality in the Carnatic. The report goes that they have intended for him the towns of Trichinopoly, Madura and Tondaiman. This Prince is secretly attached to us, and is working hard in our favour with the Marathas with whom he is very popular. The Nairs of the Malabar Coast, who have no influence on the resolutions in the Peninsula, will be out of the question.

In this situation of things, you will notice, my Lord, that M. de Bussy, clever negotiator, at the head of a French army, composed of the King's excellent troops, would have a vast field to give full scope to his talents, win allies for the nation, impress upon them the necessity to establish the French as solidly as the English are on this Coast to oppose one another. This system once accepted, our re-establishment would be consolidated with surprising rapidity. We would subsequently have only to consider what would suit us the best, which I conceive from two points of view and which I reduce to these two questions. Should we establish ourselves as a power in India and consequently participate in all the quarrels of the Princes of Hindustan? Or should we only confine ourselves to form establishments and factories for trade? The former step demands kingdoms and vast possessions and would throw the nation into continual wars which would always consume its revenues, may be, worth 24 lakhs of rupees; it would constantly excite the jealousy of these very native Princes and at all times that of the English; it would finally bind us to an annual dispatch of men which I can hardly estimate at less than 2,000 and 2,500, whether, our trade for that reason, was exclusive or more extensive than was necessary for the support of the Kingdom. The second state of existence here would consist in possessing only territories around our principal establishments, especially at Pondicherry, and provided that they fetched an income of ten lakhs of rupees, they would be sufficient to easily cover all the expenses of the factories in India after disbursing the different farmings and town duties, and maintain there the

numerous garrisons. The trade of the nation or of a Company would then only have to find funds for the administrative expenses in France and those of the Port of Lorient; the import and export profits would procure these funds in a superlative and lucrative manner.

When I present a choice to be made between the two ways of existence in India, I mean that this is possible after reducing the English to their factories alone as they were in 1749 or 1750, and not by leaving them in the powerful situation in which they are today. Now, after that, I think, my Lord (allow me to speak to you very freely), that there would be much more advantage for the nation in confining ourselves to commercial establishments, as I propose it, than in being a power in Hindustan. Besides, if I venture to express my opinion, I have no other motive than that of setting forth what I think is more advantageous for the State. It is for you, my Lord, to decide on such an important matter. Who can know better what is useful for the nation?

The King of Tanjaour has been obliged to surrender to the arms of Muhammad Ali Khan, rather of the English. He made peace towards the end of last October on very harsh conditions. He was obliged to pay 12 lakhs of rupees, besides five lakhs to the English troops and three to the eldest son of Muhammad Ali Khan who commanded the siege of Tanjaour. Independently of these 20 lakhs, which were paid on the spot, this King has mortgaged for two years, two large and fertile provinces of his kingdom, of which the annual revenue amounts to 18 lakhs, to complete the 36 lakhs to which he has bound himself.

Such is the result of the war which cost 56 lakhs to the King of Tanjaour and in which the Marathas have not taken any part.

The report is spread here that this nation has recently placed Shah Alam on the throne of Delhi and made him Emperor. This Prince is the same who protected M. Law during his campaigns of Bengal of 1759 to 1761, and is an enemy of the English. If this event has taken place, the Marathas will obtain any concessions they want from their protégé and especially the paravanas for the province of the Carnatic to have a plausible pretext for invading it with a sort of justice.

We learn from a letter which M. Hüguel, commander of the European troops of Haider Ali Khan, has recently written, that it is entirely for this Nawab to conclude peace with the Marathas, but what prevents him from doing so is that he cannot accept a condition demanded by the latter to furnish them 2,000 cavalry, 6,000 sipahees and six guns. It appears that the Marathas, in demanding these six thousand men, have designs upon the Carnatic or perhaps they intend to entice away this corps of troops and engage it in their service. Besides, Haider Ali Khan has nothing to fear in his fortresses and M. Hüguel points out that he has provisions for 40,000 men and for several years.

The English squadron under the command of Admiral Arlan[34] has returned to Madras from the Bay of Trincomalee, Island of Ceylon, where it had gone to spend the monsoon. It is reported that the English, to compensate for its inaction, propose to dispatch it with troops and sipahees to the big Island of the Andamans with a view to conquering it or seizing a big and vast natural port which is said to exist there or in the little Andaman Islands or indeed in other more southern ones. Whatever it may be, its situation ought to be advantageous because of the monsoons which prevail in the Gulf of Bengal and which will permit them (the English) to transport themselves round the whole of India at all times. The big Andaman Island, situated from 12° latitude North to 13½°, is said to be fertile; it appeared so to all the ships which have coasted along it. The people, who inhabit it, are savage and sanguinary. It has never been possible to trade with them and they have always massacred those who tried to set foot on land.

The Madras Council has just appointed an officer to go at the head of four to five hundred Europeans and sipahees and set up an establishment at the Old Queda on the Coast of Malaya. This town situated at latitude 6° North belongs to a petty Malay Prince. It is not known whether they have obtained his consent or whether they will employ force to set up this factory. It is also reported that they have fortified their small factory at Achin in the Sumatra Island. As these establishments are in favourable positions to attract articles of trade from all these parts, trade of which the branches are very widespread and very lucrative. There is no doubt that the project of the English is to seize them exclusively. They are also preparing to establish a factory on the

Coast of Marava to deprive, no doubt, the Dutch of the fishery of pearls in the vicinity of Tuticorin. A glance, my Lord, on the map of M. D'après will help to guide you in this detail.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

LAGRENEE

C^2 123, f. 115-121 v°

Pondicherry, 1st October 1772

La Grenée de Meziére,

(Duplicate)

My Lord de Boynes,

Minister for the Navy.

My Lord,

As second in command of this colony, member of the Political Committee and President of the Banker's Clearing House, set up by His Majesty's decree dared 29 September 1770, it is my duty, my Lord, to submit to you an account of the different sections of the administration to which I am attached. I hasten to avail myself of the first opportunity available to discharge this duty, since we learnt in India about your appointment to the Ministry for the Navy.

A few months ago, the celebrated Haider Ali Khan concluded peace with the Marathas and paid them, according to reports, a sum of 50 lakhs of rupees[35] or 12½ millions of francs (minted at Tours). Since then he has retrieved his losses, recalled his scattered subjects and is making preparations for an invasion into the Malabar of which he had made a partial conquest in 1766. He had restored to a large number of the Nair Chiefs the small fiefs which he had seized on condition of paying him the usual tribute. The latter, however, not very keen on keeping their agreements and finding that Haider Ali Khan was entangled first in a war with the English and then with the Marathas, shook off the yoke and became

independent. It is certain that they will succumb once again and would not be able to resist the power of this Nawab. The colony of Mahé, situated on the territory of one of his Nair Chiefs, feels some anxiety about the outcome of this event. M. Picot has written a letter to M. Law who will certainly speak to you about it. The nation cannot in the least rely on the friendship of Haider Ali Khan. Since long the authorities in France have been under an illusion about his dispositions towards the French. They believe that he is favourably disposed towards us but they are mistaken. He is avaricious, ambitious, brave, a man of genius and generally an enemy of all the Europeans. He finds that they alone, and the Marathas stand in the way of the vast projects which he is said to have formed since long to seize the Indian Peninsula. Master of the kingdoms of Mysore and Canara, of huge treasures and of thirty to forty thousand troops, he matches his ambition with his power. Although friendly with the English, he mortally hates them. He treats them with a very great consideration and we are convinced, that is the motive which impels him not to give us any help. He is well aware that it is in his interest that we should balance the forces of our rivals, but he dares not take any step in this direction lest the English unite with the Marathas to destroy him. In fact, he cannot resist these two powers when united, but in a way has nothing to fear from each one of them separately. In their turn, the English have never shown any inclination to accept the proposals of the Marathas against Haider Ali Khan, however advantageous they were.[30] By maintaining the balance among the Indian Princes of this Peninsula they have nothing to apprehend from each one of them for the Empire which they have established there. They have a positive interest in not helping to augment the forces either of the Marathas or of Haider Ali Khan. They are therefore careful not to unite with them. On the contrary, they are engaged only in maintaining the discord between these two powers. The Marathas have since long penetrated their policy and are planning to restrict them to their possessions on the Coast alone. They know that they can succeed in it only by an alliance with the French nation. For that purpose they made very attractive proposals. You are no doubt aware of them, my Lord, since M. Law had communicated them last year to M. Terray, then Minister for the Navy.[14] There is no doubt that our only hope of extricating ourselves from our trying and too tight a situation in India lies in a close union with this warlike nation. It is particularly disposed to it and is supported in this idea by the Nawab Reza Ali Khan, son of the

famous Chanda Saheb who was unfortunate to lose his life at Trichinopoly in 1752. In his turn, Reza Ali Khan has a special stake in it. He is under the protection of the Marathas having taken shelter with them. He can hope to recover the throne of Arcot, which formerly belonged to his father, only through their instrumentality. If ever this event became a reality, the nation could aspire for anything from this Prince who was brought up in this town since his tender childhood and who stayed there till its capture in 1761. His attachment for us is true and sincere. But if you think it worthwhile, my Lord, to adhere to this project and give it some shape until more favourable times permit us to put it into execution, it is absolutely essential that we should have a base of operations in India, which can serve simultaneously as a meeting place for the forces which would be assembled at the Isles and for those of the Marathas as well. Thus it is highly incumbent on us to fortify Pondicherry and make it storm-proof, for which purpose the system of M. Desclaison, Chief Engineer, recalled to France, is the only solid one and to be followed. Without this base of operations I venture to affirm, my Lord, that we shall never succeed in humbling the power of the English and that our arms cannot achieve there any lasting success, even if the forces that would be dispatched to India were to give us superiority over our rivals. They (the English) would then have recourse to a defensive war; and to deprive us of all succour, of all provisions, of all resources, they would ravage the countryside and force us to subsist only on the provisions brought by our squadrons, which state cannot last long. But Pondicherry, fortified and protected from the attacks of the enemy, could store within its precincts not only all the provisions necessary for an army to at once take the field, but also all the implements of war and artillery and even enlist trained sipahees. The Governor, who would have long ahead prepared for the alliance with the Marathas and with a number of other Princes, would form for the nation a formidable league capable, when acting in perfect unison, of immediately attacking the English. I shall not enter here into a longer detail on the advantages which a base of operations in India offers. You certainly know them, my Lord, better than I could express. But a point of which the exact importance may not have been explained to you, is the most suitable place to establish this base of operations. There is none else than Pondicherry even in its present dimensions. The Engineers who proposed the Isle of the Cocotiers certainly did not know or did not remember the local situation of the land. This Island is dominated in the

east by sand-hills 12 to 15 ft. high, in the south-east by a very large number of them 15 to 28 ft. high, in the south by mounds 15 to 16 ft. high, in the west 10 to 12 ft. high and finally in the north 8 to 10 ft high. The result is that this Isle of Cocotiers is very low, half-submerged during all the rainy season and that its water is briny. When we know the genius of the Malabarees,[36] it can be stated emphatically that they will never settle down there and will never evacuate the town of Pondicherry, entirely built today by them. Moreover, the position of the Isle of Cocotiers is very unfavourable for coastal trade and subject to many inconveniences.

The English squadron under the command of Admiral Arland is at Madras and is preparing to leave shortly for Bombay to go into dock. According to reports, it will next proceed to the Persian Gulf with a view to disrupting the sea-trade of Karim Khan, the Sophy of Persia. This Prince drove them out of his ports and desires that we should establish ourselves in the Karek Island which he wants to cede to us. He is pressing M. Pyrault, our agent at Basra, on this subject. There is not doubt that this establishment, formed with prudent measures, will be of the greatest advantage to us for European and Indian trade. I do not think that I am exaggerating when I say that a thousand bales of cloth would be sold there annually, perhaps even two thousand, that is to say the entire consumption of wool in Persia. M. Martin, at present a member of the Council here, who knows this part of Asia, is the person who deserves to be entrusted with this important operation and he would have M. Pyrault as his deputy. If ever it succeeded and acquired strength, the English would bear it a great grudge. They are aware of the friendly dispositions of Karim Khan for the nation and they are jealous about it.

The Marathas returned to their capital after the treaty of peace concluded with Haider Ali Khan. But it is not of such a permanent nature that the latter should now feel secure. In fact, he is terribly afraid of the Marathas who will sooner or later destroy him. They have under their power or their protection the Mughal Emperor or Padshah of Delhi, a tool whom they can move at their sweet will and from whom they obtain whatever they want, so that it is they who govern the Mughal Empire. The rumour goes that they are availing of this circumstance to plan an invasion of the Carnatic. The great design of this nation is to aggrandize itself rather in the southern part of their kingdom than in the northern.

The latter is inhabited by the Pathans, the Mongoles, the Tartars, brave tribes who have often defeated them. Whereas in Mysore and the Carnatic they will have to fight the Malabarees, people who are weak and spiritless. Haider Ali Khan alone is the person who impedes their plans; hence their hatred for him. As for Muhammad Ali Khan, Nawab of the Carnatic, they would have already dethroned him and replaced him by Reza Ali Khan, but for the English. That is the motive for the alliance which they propose to us to humble our rivals. It is possible that after this fortunate event, the Marathas may consequently try to expel us. But I am not sure that they will do so if we confine ourselves to territories around our coastal establishments which will cover their expenses. It is certain that as soon as we shall have the ambition to become an Asiatic power, or wish to possess provinces, kingdoms, we shall always be forced to get entangled in the quarrels of the Indian Princes, and in that case, whatever be the revenues from the territories which we shall possess, we shall always spend much more that what they will produce, in addition to the emigration of Europeans whom the Metropolis will be obliged to send here annually and whose loss could be estimated at one-third every year. Forty to fifty square kilometres round about Pondicherry with a revenue of four millions (francs) would, with the customs, suffice to place us in a very advantageous position, cover all the expenses of the establishments in India, maintain there 3,000 soldiers and as many sipahees and give us a respectable status. This space could hold a sufficient number of weavers to form several cargoes for the return journey of the ships to Europe and satisfy the needs of the nation. This manner of establishing trade with India would fulfil, what I believe, the aim which is contemplated since long. It would be entirely to the advantage of France who would not waste any of her funds over her establishments in Asia. These would eventually procure for her a market for several millions of goods of our manufacturers.

An objection might perhaps be raised that the English, who have, so to say, set up an Empire, in India, not only find the means to provide for all their expenses but also to disburse to their Metropolis five hundred thousand pounds sterling every year and send back all their ships packed with very rich goods purchased with the revenues of their possessions. Nothing is more true, unfortunately, but what is the result of this precious advantage? Of very little account, in spite of the three thousand European

soldiers and twenty thousand sipahees, at which I estimate their forces from Vizagapatam to Madura. An illustration will prove it beyond all question. When Haider Ali Khan declared war against them in 1767 he contented himself with ruining the whole Carnatic, directed all his manoeuvres to avoid fighting a pitched battle, engaged himself solely in capturing the convoys and making prisoners. No sooner had the second campaign begun than the English were worn out by their expenses. Deprived of the revenues from the patrimony of Muhammad Ali Khan, they diverted to this war those from Bengal which also did not suffice. They were obliged to forcibly seize at Madras the funds of their merchants who had arrived from Manila. Haider Ali Khan performed this feat with seven to eight thousand cavalry and twelve to fifteen thousand sipahees. He finally forced them to sign a treaty, with his camp pitched four kilometres from Madras. What would happen if the Marathas followed the same plan and attacked the English in the Carnatic, at Masulipatam and in the whole of the North, and at the same time in Bengal, and call into action their fleet on the Malabar Coast ? Within two campaigns the English would be reduced to the last extremity.[37] I venture to affirm before you, my Lord, the more forces, troops and warships they have, the greater the expenses they would have to incur and the less would they be able to defray them. Soon their sipahees would abandon them and join us and the Marathas, and within a short time they would be compelled to confine themselves within the walls of their fortresses. I request you to kindly cast a glance at the map of the Indian Peninsula drawn by M. Jaffreys and dedicated to the Company. This Geographer has clearly indicated the situation of the Maratha Empire. You will easily see that the execution of this plan presents no difficulty for them who have 1,50,000 cavalry. But allow me to repeat, my Lord, we must first fortify Pondicherry and make it impregnable by following the system of defence of M. Desclaison.

M. Hügmel whom M. le Duc de Choiseul had dispatched to enlist himself in the service of Haider Ali Khan has died. This Nawab has replaced him by M. Russel. M. Gardé called Good Natured, continues to command the French troops in the service of Bassalat Jang. He has with him M. de Lalée who holds the rank of a Major in his detachment and who is a man of merit. This detachment subsists by its own efforts here and provides for all its needs of every kind. Nizam Ali, Subhedar of the Deccan, is

a Prince given up to his seraglio, without genius, without vigour and entirely ruled by a Divan who is devoted to the English. The King of Tanjaour, since the English imposed on him the tribute last year in the name of Muhammad Ali Khan, Nawab of Arcot, is oppressed and restrained by an English garrison which has reduced this power almost to a cipher. No reliance can be placed on it at this moment. Such is approximately the political situation of the Indian Peninsula. I have not spoken to you about some Nair Chiefs on the Malabar Coast like the Kings of Travancore and Cochin, because they do not influence at all the political affairs in this region.

I have been serving the Company for the last 30 years and have been a member of the Council for 15 years, out of which the last four in the capacity of a Second in command of this colony and as such I am supposed to command the troops. This formality sufficed for the establishments so long as they were under the control of a commercial Company, but as soon as they were transferred to the immediate authority of the King, I made my representations to M. le Duc de Praslin requesting him to kindly continue me in my functions as Second in command and obtain for me from the King the commission of a Second in command, so that if His Majesty's troops passed here, the honours and the prerogatives attached to my office might not suffer in any way. This Minister had relinquished his office when my letter was delivered to him. He could neither comply with my request nor give effect to the memorandum which I had addressed him at the same time. Pray allow me, my Lord, to place before you these two matters and request you to give them a moment's consideration. During all these years, the troops have been parading under arms, and the drum has been played, for the Second in command of Pondicherry. In the absence of the Governor, he has been giving the orders and the keys of the town were brought to him. It is undoubtedly fulfilling the functions of a Second in command and it is in pursuance of this rank which I have held for the last four years that I request you to kindly send me its commission. As for the subject of my memorandum I equally solicit your kindness in honouring me with the same confidence as was shown to me by M. le Duc de Praslin and the authorities of the East India Company who designated me to take over the office of the Commandant-General in case of death or retirement of M. Law. Thirty years of zealous and disinterested service lead me to hope

that your fairness will not introduce any change in the arrangements made in my favour.

The clearing house is actually composed of Messrs Le Conte and Martin, members of the Supreme Council, and of M. Demars, secretary. We have succeeded after hard work in settling the accounts of the farmer-generals of the domains of the Company and those of one Arombaté Malabar and his contractor. We have still to examine that of Ramalinga. This Indian has been purveyor to the army and then farmer-general of the lands at the time of the capture of Pondicherry. We have begun this job and shall do our best to finish it towards the beginning of the next year so as to send it to the Controller-General just as he has ordered us to do it. This clearing of accounts over, there will only be left those to be settled which are not of much consequence.

This is, my Lord, the position of the clearing house so far as the liabilities of the Company are concerned. M. Law will give you an account of the assets side of the clearing house, a body over which he presides.

The meagre financial assistance we receive for the expenses of the establishments in India are too inadequate to enable us to cover them, and we have been compelled for the last three years to have recourse to onerous means to provide for the most essential requirements. For the last 18 months civil officers have not received their salary and the military officers have received only half. As a result, the credit of the nation and of the private individuals is completely ruined and leaves us without any resources. The Council has made its representations to you on this subject and I can do nothing but to join it in soliciting you to pay heed to our misery and to the low state of our finances.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

LAGRENEE DE MEZIERE

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I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

LAGRENEE DE MEZIERES

M. de Grandmaison

Ex-Commissioner of War in France

C^2 164

Colonies of the East July 1773

Memorial

Proposal made to the Minister for the Navy and the Colonies, with a view to procure the alliance of the Marathas for France, the only way to stop the progress of the English power.

My Lord will recall the memorials which I had the honour to submit to him two years ago on the project which I had formed of proceeding to India for an important undertaking which may turn out to be of the greatest utility for the French nation and which circumstances have at the present moment rendered more urgent. I was then expecting to receive the proceeds of an inheritance of more than 40,000 francs which fell to me by the unfortunate death of my second son, assassinated while on duty in the King's service by the Corsican brigands. I intended to employ the proceeds from this inheritance on this expedition for which I solicited nothing more than the tacit approval of my Lord, and the assistance which it was in his power to grant me. Unexpected events having deprived me of this resource, I can only spare for this undertaking about 10,000 francs, funds which, as I shall demonstrate it, are not at all sufficient for an undertaking of this type. This gap can be made up without costing a single penny to the King and without raising the slightest sensation by a means which I shall indicate to my Lord when I submit to him the list of persons without whom I cannot take up this undertaking, and join to it the statement of the expenses which it will entail.

Before entering into this detail, I shall point out to my Lord that we must give up thinking of India if we do not promptly follow the course which I venture to propose. If the reports which we have received from England are true, the English have become the rulers of India. The huge treasures which this fresh acquisition procures for them, make them automatically masters of all the seas. If this report is false, which is possible, and if this event has not already taken place, it may happen in the near future. Is there thus anything more urgent than to secretly destroy this growth of power by creating for them in India enemies who can crush it before it has achieved more stability and by procuring for ourselves an alliance which gives us existence which we no longer possess there, especially when a step of this nature does not cost a single penny

to the King and does not give valid reason for complaint to anyone. M. de Colbert, convinced of this truth that in the possession of India the State ought to consider less the advantages which it draws from it than the damage it would suffer if a European nation acquired a predominant superiority over the seas by its commerce in this part of the world, established a Company at a great cost and expenses to the King to prevent the Dutch, whose naval power was then dreaded, from usurping this superiority. Ought not stronger reasons today urge the Ministry to prevent the contingency which M. de Colbert had forseen, when we see that the English have seized or are about to seize Bengal, kingdom with a revenue larger than that of England ? What a service will my Lord render to the State and what a glory will reflect on his Ministry, if, without any commotion and without any expense, he, from his cabinet, forestalls an event of this nature by frustrating the establishment of a power which bloody and ruinous wars cannot perhaps destroy afterwards. To succeed in it, we need at the present moment a man resolute enough to venture to dedicate himself to his country, capable of judging events and acting according to circumstances, and since these demand that I must speak with some liberty, I shall say that I possess sufficient firmness to attempt the execution of the project and resources within me to lead it to success.

If anything can speak in favour of this project, it is the attempt of the Englishman who (if the news is true) has just ventured in the Mughal Empire for his nation what I had proposed two years back to do there for mine own. My plan was to go to Delhi, get there the troops of this empire placed on the lines of the military establishment of France, have them trained in all the exercises and for all possible manoeuvres and employ them afterwards to impress upon the whole of India the superiority which this Empire ought to enjoy therein. I submitted at that time a fairly lengthy memorial to my Lord on these different points. I thought that having succeeded to this point, it would not be difficult for me to impress upon those who govern it how an alliance with a commercial and powerful European nation would be necessary for it, how they ought to dread the ambition of the English, and induce them to desire the alliance of France and grant it cessions and other advantages which could repair the losses this power has sustained in this part of the world, and revive its commerce. This project suits my resolve which dreads neither sufferings

nor dangers, my intense desire to deserve the kindness of my Loid and the plan to restore my fortune ruined by outrageous injustice.

The favour with which M. Poivre received this project was an eaily and very flattering satisfaction for me. M. Poivre, informed of the revolutions in the Mughal Empire where everything is in a state of commotion, advised me to direct my plans to the Marathas, a discreet and warlike nation which will receive (he said to me) the offer of my services with all the more eagerness as it appears disposed to profit by the troubles of the Mughal Emperor to seize this empire and sovereignty of the Indian dominion. Moreover, the Marathas needed an infantry which could stand up to that which the English have formed in this part of the world, and gunners and clever ordnance workers for the casting of guns as well as for the manufacture of arms.

This wise counsel, which I had accepted, today perforce becomes the guiding spirit of my conduct. I therefore propose, by simply changing my course, to proceed to Goa from where I shall afterwards repair to the capital of the Marathas. I shall take with me my men without letting anyone, except the officer who would act as chief, know exactly either their destination or their mission.

List of officers and others with whom I intend to proceed to the capital of the Marathas.

One officer who has been in service in Prussia ..	1
Four excellent sergeants	4
One excellent cavalry sergeant	1
One excellent dragon sergeant	1
Four engineers	4
One surveyor	1
Two excellent gunners	2
Two good ordnance workers	2
Two good smelters	2
Two gunsmiths	2
One secretary	1
Myself	1
	22

Having reason to fear that it might create too great a sensation if I took these men from the Isle of France, and moreover, not expecting to find there easily persons such as I need, because the authorities there would not like to part with them, I shall be obliged to pick them in France and embark them as merchants. The statement of the expenses which this small expedition will entail is as follows :—

Statement of the expenses of the expedition

	Frs.
Travelling expenses of 22 persons from Paris to Lorient or to Brest at 150 francs per head.	3,300
150 frs. per head for 16 persons only to procure them comforts during the voyage.	2,400
Passage for 22 persons at 5 frs. per head per day for 244 days' voyage including the calls.	26,440
Expenses for 22 persons at Surat for 15 days at 6 frs. per head.	1,980
Passage from Surat to Goa, halt, journey from Goa to the capital of the Marathas, carriages, transport of arms and of baggage.	6,000
	40,120

As I have mentioned above, I can only raise about 10,000 frs. This small amount which I shall invest in private cargo, should be considered only as a resource for emergencies. My Lord can meet the expenses which I have itemized by granting at my request to someone of his choice an interest in the contract for naval supplies, which he will renew, and preference at a fair price in some contracts for naval supplies which I shall submit to him.

I am sure no one will level the charge of cupidity against me, as I do not aspire for anything out of which I can make my profit, but only seek means to proceed 6,000 leagues away from my country and face greatest perils. If this undertaking does not succeed, the King will have invested nothing of his own, and it cannot give cause for any complaint, none being a security for the undertaking of an individual, leaving on a merchant

ship, without a mission and without apparent assistance and orders. If it succeeds, what a reaping of laurels for those who will have undera ken it, and what advantage will they not procure for the State! In case of complete success, my first efforts would be to urge the power I would ɿ a ve served so well to furnish sufficient funds to France so that she can withstand the English if they took exception to what had been done.

If my Lord wishes to grant to M. de Grandmaison his passage to India, that of 15 persons, and free freight for 50,000 iron shots, 40,000 steel shots, about 20 barrels of gunflint, a few thousand lead shots, some tools indispensable for workers who will accompany him, and foı 6,000 tons of goods necessary for procuring him money on his arrival (in India) for his subsistence and for that of his men until his arrangements with the Marathas are completed, he will defray the expenses for the purchase of the materials and goods, and will give sureties for the repayment, in France, of the cost of thə passage and the freight in two years' time. Himself and his men will consist of 16 persons,

namely:

3 Sergeants	3
1 Cavalry sergeant	1
2 Gunners and 2 Ordnance workeıs	4
2 Musket smiths	2
2 Smelters	2
1 Gun-smith	1
1 Gun-powder workeı	1
1 Secretary	1
M. de Grandmaison	1
Total ..	16

Memorial

If his Lordship wishes that M. de Grandmaison should meet with a good reception from the Marathas, he must take with him a few thousand Cannon-balls, 4 pounders and 12 pounders, and some bombshells for which he would pay. M. Grandmaison will reduce everything according to His Lordship's wishes. But His Lordship should realise that he must be put in a position to act. The execution of the project in all its scope

which had been originally submitted to him would have been more advantageous. We must conform to circumstances and to the times.

If my Lord is kind enough to accept these proposals, their execution will follow immediately, and my Lord should rest assured that the activity and industry of M. de Grandmaison will work a great change in the affairs of India and that he will employ all the reasoning and the springs of politics to urge the Marathas to furnish to France financial assistance which is usually furnished to a power which one expects to have as an auxiliary.

Memorial

4th Document
October 1773

This memorial, which is very nearly the duplicate of the preceding one, was sent to M. Poivre at Fontainebleau in October 1773 so that he should speak to the Minister about the affair.

Next winter I must execute the project which I formed two years back to proceed to India for an important undertaking which can be of the greatest utility for the French nation; otherwise I must renounce it. I shall sacrifice for the sake of its execution the meagre funds at my disposal. I would have employed all the proceeds of an inheritance which fell to me last year, if unexpected events had not deprived me of the property. But this gap can be filled without embarrassing anyone and without costing a single penny to the King. As I must speak quite frankly in an affair of this type, it is very important that M. Poivre, because of the interest he had officially displayed in the preservation of our possessions and our commerce in India, was pleased to explain to the Minister the utility of this project and indicate to him the means which can bring about its execution, means which I shall explain when I have prepared the details of the number and of the quality of the persons without whom I cannot pursue this undertaking, and presented the statement of the expenses which it will entail.

France being in need of the alliance of an Indian power which is in a position to lay down the law there, my first plan was to proceed to Delhi, get the troops of this empire placed on the lines of the military establishment of France, have them trained in all the exercises and for all possible manoeuvres and employ them afterwards to bring home to the whole of India the superiority which this empire ought to enjoy there.

I thought that having succeeded to this point, it would not be difficult for me to impress upon those who govern it, how an alliance with a commercial and powerful European nation would be necessary for it and induce them to desire that of France and grant her cessions on the coast and other advantages capable of restoring the losses which this power has suffered in this part of the world and reviving its commerce. This project suited my resolve which dreads neither sufferings nor dangers. Some talents for securing a hearing and a little knack to get out of a fix according to circumstances, which I could acquire because of the knowledge of the ways of the world, the intense desire to deserve the favour of the Minister who watches over the welfare of the Navy and of the Colonies, and that of restoring my fortune ruined by an outrageous injustice, seemed to give me confidence about its execution.

The favour with which M. Poivre received this project was for me the first and very flattering satisfaction. But informed of the revolutions that have taken place in the Mughal Empire where everything is actually in a state of commotion, he advised me to direct my plans to the Marathas, a discreet and warlike nation, which will receive (he said to me) the offer of my services with all the more eagerness as it appears disposed to profit by the troubles, which divide the Mughal Empire, to seize this empire and the sovereignty of the Indian dominion. Moreover as it needs, to succeed therein, the creation of an infantry which can stand up to that which a European power has formed in this part of the world, and gunners and clever ordnance workers for the casting of guns as well as for the manufacture of arms. All means tending to the same end being alike to me, I have only to change my course. I therefore propose to proceed to Goa from where I shall afterwards repair to the capital of the Marathas. I shall take with me my men without letting any one, with the exception of the officer who would act as leader, know exactly its destination or its mission.

Statement of the officers and others with whom I intend to proceed from the ports of France to Surat and from there to the Capital of the Marathas, passing via Goa.

1 Officer who has been in the service of the King of Prussia and who is capable of commanding.	1
4 Excellent sergeants capable of making 4 good majors ..	4

1 Excellent cavalry sergeant	1
1 Excellent dragon sergeant	1
4 Engineers	4
1 Surveyor who is a good draftsman	1
2 Excellent gunners	2
2 Excellent ordnance workers	2
2 Excellent smiths	2
2 Smelters	2
1 Secretary	1
Myself	1
Total ..	22

As I have reason to fear that the sensation may be too great if I pick up these men from the Isle of France and besides, as I do not hope to find there easily persons such as I need, because the authorities there would not like to part with them, I shall be obliged to collect them in France and embark them as merchants. The statement of the expenses which this small expedition will entail is as follows:—

Statement of the expenses of the expedition

	Francs
Travelling expenses of 22 persons from Paris to Lorient or to Brest calculated at 150 frs. per head	3,300
150 frs. per head for 16 persons only for procuring them comforts during 8 months' voyage	2,400
Passage for 22 persons at 5 frs. per head for 244 days' voyage including the calls	26,440
Expenses for 22 persons at Surat for 15 days at 6 frs. per head	1,980
Passage from Surat to Goa, halt, journey from Goa to the capital of the Marathas, carriages, transport of arms and equipment	6,000
Total ..	40,120

I have at my disposal about 10,000 frs. These meagre funds which I shall employ in private cargo, ought to be considered only as a resource in emergencies. The Minister can meet the expenses which I have itemized by granting at my request to someone he prefers an interest in the agreement for naval supplies which he will renew and by granting some contract for naval supplies which I shall present to him. This matter can be arranged without causing sensation, by deducting a slight portion from the benefits of each one of those who will be charged with the task of supplies. The Minister could grant benefits in this affair. I can assure that this one (benefit) shall not be put to bad purpose. It is the interests of the King which I stipulate rather than mine which occupy only a second place and which are necessarily bound with those of the King. Perhaps there will never arise another occasion when a Minister can so easily and at such a little cost attempt an undertaking which, if it has a good success, will do the greatest honour to his Ministry and will be so advantageous to the State, and if it does not succeed, cannot give cause for any complaint on the part of any foreign powers, the Minister not being a guarantee for the undertaking of a private party on a merchant ship, without mission and without apparent assistance and orders.

I would correspond with M. Anquetil, Consul of the French nation at Surat. The Marathas have already proposed to him to make to the French the cession of Bassein, a small port in a peninsula on which depends the safety of Bombay. If we were not disturbed by the English because of the fact that the Marathas have put the French nation in a position no longer to fear them, we could accept the offers of which it is easy to realize all the importance. The first efforts of the author of this project, if he met with a fortunate success, would be to urge the power, which he will have served, to furnish large financial assistance to France so as to enable her to put her navy on such a footing as no longer to fear the English either in the Indian seas or in those of this hemisphere.

M. Poivre is too good a citizen to mind if it is represented to him that it is the duty of a man in position to forcefully explain the importance of the projects, of which he realizes the utility, to the Ministers occupied by a multitude of ever-recurring affairs and perpetually on guard against the proposals of private individuals. In this case, it is not an idea proposed by a person carried away by the transport of an imagination.

It is really a vigorous project, but which, if it succeeds, changes the actual complexion of our affairs in India and as a necessary consequence affects our naval forces which it re-establishes.

Memorial

M. de Grandmaison proposed his project on India to M. de Boynes at the beginning of his administration as Minister for the Navy. He had the honour to prepare a plan on this subject in consultation with this Minister in June 1771. It was decided that the Navy should give him a free passage to India with his men and his cargo, but that he should purchase the materials at his own expense. These facts are recorded in the Depar'ment for India and known to M. Poivre whom M. de Grandmaison met in connection with this project as he had been advised to do.

Unable to procure funds necessary for the purchase of the materials, M. de Grandmaison, repeatedly made his representations and in 1772, 1773 and 1774 that the Navy should make an advance for this expense. These facts prove that he is the author of the project and that those who proposed it after him, only adopted the plan which he had given. M. Poivre, who was very much satisfied with it, wrote to M. de Grandmaison from Fontainebleau on 27th December last : "*If the Minister did me the honour to consult me on his plan on India, rest assured that I shall find out how you stand and that I shall explain the utility of your project.*"

He said in a second letter written from Goa on the 9th of this month: "*I have nothing else to communicate to you except my regret for not having found the time to speak to the Minister about your project and your courage.*"

M. de Grandmaison who has not at all visited India, perhaps knows it better than many persons who have been there. At least he has knowledge about the genius of the different peoples who inhabit it. As it is not a question of going from town to town or visiting all the coasts to establish trade, and as all the operations are confined to proceeding to the capital of the Marathas and staying there till the complete execution of the project, there is rather a need for an active person who knows how to speak to and negotiate with all the persons with whom

he will have to deal, get out of the difficulty according to the circumstances and cleverly handle the interests of France, than for a man whose all advantage is that he has been at Pondicherry, at Mahé or elsewhere, without having set foot in the territory of the Marathas.

Moreover, it is necessary to give to the Maratha troops, independently of the training in our manoeuvres, a military establishment less extensive, as a matter of fact, than ours, but sufficient to keep order in the corps and in all the parts of the military administration. Who will fulfil this object better than a man who has been commissioner for war, who has been charged with different items of supplies and who has seen under his very eyes the enforcement of the regulations which are observed in our armies.

List of the persons whom M. de Grandmaison would take with him to, Mahé to proceed to the kingdom of the Marathas, as well as of the quantity of the materials and tools which he would embark, and of the expenses to be incurred for everything.

Sergeants	6
Cavalry sergeants	2
Sergeants for light troops	2
Gunners and Ordnance workers..	6
Musket-smiths	6
Smelters	6
Gun powder manufacturers	4
Gun and mortar founders	2
A Secretary	1
The author of the project	1
Total ..	36

Expenses relating to these 36 persons

The first 35 will be given 300 frs. per head to proceed to the place of embarkation and purchase some means of comfort on the ship, which amounts to	10,500 frs.
The expense for food for 36 persons for six months is estimated at 100 frs. per head per month, which amounts to 21,400 frs. As only the expense to be actually incurred is estimated and as, on the other hand, this latter will be an item for repayment to be made by the King to the Company for Naval Supplies, the article falling under the repayments to be made by M. de Grandmaison from the proceeds of the return goods from India to France, will be actually drawn for	see Memorial
The crew is fixed at 60 men and its subsistence for six months at the rate of 10 frs. per day per head at the sum of 5,400 frs. which, like the preceding one, will be entered here for ..	see Memorial
Subsistence for the said six months for the Captain, Chief Petty Officer and Assistant Petty Officer at the rate of 100 frs. per head per month is fixed at the sum of 1,800 frs., which will be likewise drawn only for	see Memorial
During the said time the wages of the crew at the rate of 15 frs. per month per head is fixed at the sum of	5,400 frs.
	15,900
The salary of the Captain, the Chief Petty Officer and the Assistant Petty Officer during the said time is fixed at the sum of	2,160 frs.

namely :

of the Captain at 200 frs. per month.. ..	1,200	
of the Chief Petty Officer at 100 frs. per month ..	600	2,160
of the Assistant Petty Officer at 60 frs. per month ..	360	

Quantities of the materials to be embarked and their prices

800,000 iron-shots at 22 frs. per 100	176,000	frs.
150,000 steel-shots at 60 frs. per 100 ..	90,000	
150,000 lead-shots at 30 frs. per 100	45,000	
15,000 canon-balls, 4 pounders at 25 frs. per 100 ..	4,500	
2,000 canon-balls, 12 pounders at 75 frs. per 100 ..	1,500	
25 barrels of gun-flint estimated at 40 frs. per barrel at the rate of 4000 flints per barrel	1,000	320,000,[38]
Tools for smiths, smelters and casters estimated at	2,000	
Presents of arms and other jewels which, according to the custom of the country, must be made to the Raja of Vissapour and his Minister ..	4,800	
Total of the expense to be actually incurred ..	3,42,860	frs.

It must be pointed out that the author of the project is for the last 18 years a creditor of the State for a sum of 2,24,990 frs.. for which he asks no other payment than the amount of 3,42,860 frs., which he will repay from return goods to France in two years, to be counted from the day of his departure. The memorial, which follows, indicates the means for providing for this expense without costing a single penny to the King.

The materials to be embarked will weigh 12,00,000 kgs. which come to 600 tons. As there are 36 passengers, the ship must be of 800 tonnage.

Memorial

The navy could make the necessary advance for the execution of the project without spending a single penny.

The author of the project has recently got an inheritance which brings him 55,000 frs. Independently of this inheritance, which he did not expect, he had left the creditors, with respect to whom he has been left unprotected, funds and collections which will pay off his debts. His principal creditors are gentlemen who bemoan his misfortune and will willingly consent to the means of extricating him out of it.

45,000 frs. can be employed for the execution of a part of his project (10,000 frs. remaining out of 55,000 frs. will serve to pay the advances made to him during the last 5 years that he has abandoned all his belongings to his creditors and to provide himself with things necessary for

his voyage). If His Lordship permits the principal creditors and their syndics o present themselves before him and if he agrees to tell them that : would be pleased if they left, for two years, to M. de Grandmaison, the use of 55,000 frs. which would be employed by him only towards ends which would enable him to pay off more promptly his debts, and even give them assurances that this repayment would be effected at the end of two years.

The balance of 2,97,860 frs. (after deducting 45,000 frs. from the estimated total expenditure of 342,860 frs.) could be found if His Lordship grants benefits in the naval supplies or in other transactions to individuals, who are honest and well known businessmen who would furnish this amount to M. de Grandmaison; he could even induce His Lordship the Controller-General of Finance to agree to these arrangements. If it was not possible to complete the amount of 2,97,860 frs., with this assistance, His Lordship could make up for it by making M. de Grandmaison stand surety to the merchants who would furnish the materials which have to be embarked.

His Lordship is requested to note that here it is a question of a project which will not only decide the fate of the possessions and trade of the French nation in India but of her subjection to the English on all the seas; that never was an affair more important for the honour of his Ministry and for the interests of the nation; that there is not a moment to lose for its execution; that it will be difficult to find a man who, animated by motives as powerful as those which urge M. de Grandmaison to take up an undertaking for which he risks everything involving his person, dedicates himself with so much steadfastness and resolution; that he has received from nature some gifts to express himself and write; that aspiring for the satisfaction of making for himself a name rather than that of recovering some fortune of which he has been so unjustly deprived, he will employ all kinds of means to succeed in his plans; and that if they do not succeed wholly, they cannot fail at least to produce some effect of utmost importance in the present circumstances; that finally France, which will draw all the benefit therefrom, will not have invested or risked anything of her own towards its success.

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M. de Repentigny

Interim Commandant at Mahe

September 1774 – December 1775

C^2 139, f. 316-322 v°

Chirakkal is a Prince of the Imperial House, and one of the successors to the Empire of the Malabar Coast. He held the post and dignity of the Regent, when in 1766, Emperor Kolattiri his uncle, was subdued and conquered by the Nawab Haider Ali Khan. Instead of following the Emperor to Travancore, Chirakkal, till last year, withdrew to the factory of Tellicherry where he lived on a modest salary which the English government allotted to him. This Prince, tired of the private life he led there and in the hope of regaining the Empire by this means, decided last year, as soon as he learnt that the Nawab was on the Malabar Coast, to personally go, at the risk of being made a prisoner, and offer him his services in the army. He had a good reputation, but the Nawab, after the termination of the campaign, instead of giving him the command of the Empire to which he laid claim, merely gave him that of Cotiatte which he could not refuse. The English were at first very angry at the withdrawal of this Prince to the Nawab, having planned since long to make of him subsequently on the Malabar Coast what they have made of Muhammad Ali Khan on the Coromandel Coast.

This Domingues Rodrigues is a topas, that is to say an Indian Christian, who enjoys credit and marks of consideration among the English; he assumed the right to watch over the conduct of Prince Chirakkal.

As their political designs on this Prince were no longer possible, and not to lose the advantage of the service which they had rendered him by offering him a shelter in their colony, they continued to cultivate his friendship, through one Domingues Rodrigues, their interpreter, in the hope of utilizing his very nomination to the territory of Cotiatte.

It is on this policy that they cast the first foundations of a project which tended to nothing less than to seize the whole pepper trade. You always strike good bargains when you have lot of money. Chirakkal, finding himself in arrears for the farming dues to the Nawab, feared that he would have to return to Shrirangapatan. I had personal knowledge that he was seeking money. He had written to me as early as September requesting me to obtain for him a loan of 3 to 4 lakhs from the nation. Taking advantage of his difficulty, the English obliged him, by their treaties, to deliver them his stock of pepper at the rate of Rs. 80 per

Khandee, of which the current price is Rs. 135 to Rs. 140 and sometimes much dearer. Chirakkal consented to everything on the condition, however, that the English should help him to regain not only his kingdom, of which this great conqueror had deprived him, but also the possessions which had formerly belonged to his house and which were broken up either through donation by his ancestors or as a result of war, and that by agreeing to pay a tribute to the Nawab, he would be free to levy from them such contribution as he would deem fit. All the conditions of this treaty being drawn up between the parties, the great job was to get it accepted by the Nawab. The English were well aware that they could succeed in it only by means of (free distribution of) money, and they behaved accordingly.

It is on this last article that Chirakkal appears to take his stand to assert his rights of sovereignty on the territories of Cartenatte (Kadattanad) and Corringotte (Kurangod) Nair, of whom the former was for the last 30 to 40 years absolutely independent, and the latter for nearly a century.

Towards the end of October, this Domingues Rodrigues left (Tellicherry) to prepare the ground at Shrirangapatan, entrusted with 5 lakhs, of which one lakh was meant to be distributed in the Darbar in order to win patrons and friends there, 350,000 to 360,000 were to be given as advance for the farming of 600,000 rupees which he proposed, and the balance was to be employed in paying the arrears of farming of Chirakkal which amounted to only 100,000 rupees.

This celebrated conqueror is always fought with such weapons with success. Prince Chirakkal and this Domingues Rodrigues thereby smoothed away all the difficulties and obtained all that they demanded, but in spite of the advances paid by more than half on the capital of farming, the Nawab required from Chirakkal that he left at his court one of his brothers who died there in last April, and Domingues Rodrigues was also obliged to leave there as a hostage one of his children who is still there.

What may appear most astonishing is that this treaty of which the clauses have been dictated by the English themselves, has to day begun to give them lot of anxiety, especially since we concluded our peace. The territory, which forms the limits of Tellicherry and from which they obtain Rs. 40,000 as revenues, consists for the best part in lands which have been given to them as security for the large sums which they have advanced to Emperor Chirakkal, uncle of the present incumbent. The

latter, dissatisfied with them on the question of the price of his pepper, is indeed planning to recover all his rights on these limits. It is not known what decision they will take on this point, but it is certain that Mr. Boddam, who was obliged to send all his Europeans to Bombay, augments his garrison with all the natives who wish to enter the service.

Nawab Haider Ali Khan owes all what he is to the nation and he has often been on this point quite sincere in confessing it himself. It is to the detachment of M. Hügel, that he is indebted for his rise and his conquests. This brave officer, after serving for three or four years and fighting under his flag, of which he was the most solid prop, was obliged to retire without receiving from him the slightest satisfaction for his services. We have still, since the re-establishment, a detachment of the nation in his service which he treats very shabbily and very harshly. The officers have hardly anything to subsist on, and M. Russel who commands them has not the freedom to enter the Darbar unless he is summoned to it. He does not enjoy any consideration therein and is totally ignorant of what is taking place in it, not even in matters which concern us.

Knowing, as we do, that we haven't got any forces at Mahé, he sends here, without informing us about his intentions and about his arrangements, a Prince, whose authority we cannot recognize, at the head of 10,000 men, in which there are three battalions of his sipahees, to seize a territory protected by the Nation, and on the information he receives that this Prince has been defeated everywhere, he dispatches another body of his own troops with a general to a place, 12 kms. from here, with the order to wait for the outcome of this enterprise and in case I do not settle with Chirakkal, to join this Prince and continue to wage war against us. This is the return and gratitude of this Nawab for a Nation which has always but shown him marks of attachment. He is a Prince so selfish that one could be assured in advance that he will always take the side of the highest bidder. We have seen that on every occasion he has sacrificed everything to money, and even if, in case of necessity, we found him ready to give us help, he would sell it to us so dearly that we would never be in a position to pay for it. He is too powerful and we are too weak especially in this part to declare ourselves as his enemies, but we would be shutting our eyes if we believe that we can ever rely on his word. Besides, he is so touchy and so distrustful that he will always think that he has more to fear than to expect from us.

This Prince appears to be seriously thinking of enlarging his navy at Mangalore. I saw here twice during the war of Mahé his commissioner-general for artillery who commanded the two Palles with which he had come. He pressed me much to give him 20 to 25 carpenters. I declined saying to him that I could not allow anyone to leave this place unless our differences with Prince Chirakkal were settled. I since learnt that he had embarked 120 to 130 carpenters whom he collected at Cochin. This Commissioner told me that the Nawab had conveyed everything on the spot, wood for 16 Palles which could carry from 20 to 30 guns. It is undoubtedly a great misfortune for the Malabar Coast, for, there will be as many pirates to be more dreaded than even the Marathas, for the trade of this Coast, Mangalore being situated more advantageously for cruising with safety and without risks. We have very recently seen of what they are capable. There issued forth from Mangalore in the month of January two palles mounted with 14 to 16 guns commanded by an officer of the Nawab who attacked indiscriminately all the ships which they came across, and among others two frigates, one Portuguese and the other English. Fortunately, the latter proved to be the stronger.

For four months there has been great unrest in the regions round about Calicut and the territory of Cotiatte where some of their Princes appeared again and again, but with too small detachments, badly armed and ill-provided with munitions, and not having anyone at their head capable of commanding them and leading them. The result of it was that a very large number of them were beaten and defeated. The losses they suffered did not prevent them from returning several times to the charge, and there are still some in different places who are holding their own, and who are giving much trouble to the generals of the Nawab. The inhuman cruelties, which they practise in these two kingdoms to extract money, have been the chief causes of the general rising of the people which inhabit them.

Ali Raja, whose territory is only 20 kms. away from Mahé, so far appeared to pay particular attention to maintain and value the friendship of the nation. This Prince, who was in the beginning only a simple Mopla chief, succeeded by his courage in obtaining recognition as King of Cannanore and since that time maintained himself there by force of arms. Although he possesses only a small territory, he is the only Prince in this part who is in a position to support himself by his own resources.

He successfully waged a war with the English and with the House of Kolattiri. All the Mopla Muslims, almost as large in numbers as the Nairs, being strangers everywhere, that is to say, not having anywhere else except at Cannanore a Prince of their nation and of their religion, who rules in the territory which they inhabit. Ali Raja benefits by the fact that, wherever they may be, they consider him, recognize him and obey him everywhere as their chief. They run to his succour from anywhere as soon as they know that he is threatened or is in difficulties. Moreover, his territory hardly furnishes him 15,000 to 18,000 men, all of them well armed and determined to sacrifice their life for the preservation of his person and his rights.

He is the Prince, who served the Nawab most effectively in his two campaigns on the Malabar Coast, and the latter had given him as a reward the general command of the territory which he (the Nawab) had conquered from Emperor Colastry; but the protection and the credit of Chirakkal prevailed over the services of Ali Raja, whom the Nawab recently relieved of all the commands which he had given him. He has even become suspect in his eyes; the rebellion of several Mopla villages in which he is accused of having a hand secretly, has aroused the suspicions of the Nawab who is said to have decided to wage war on him.

Ali Raja, who is threatened, has done everything possible to stave off the storm, but if, in spite of that, the Nawab persists in his desire to declare war on his territory, he has to offer the most vigorous defence, and certainly the Nawab will not triumph over this Prince as he has done in the case of all others on the Malabar Coast.

In December, the English made the conquest of the Island of Salsette which is separated from Bombay only by the river which is common to these two islands. Although completely at peace, they laid siege to Thana, which is its main fortress, without giving the Marathas the slightest scent of this enterprise. The English claim that this conquest is of the greatest importance for them. They can find there at hand the subsistence and all the fresh supplies which they may require for the garrison of Bombay. They also claim that this island is suitable for the setting up of all sorts of factories, so that in a few years' time they expect to find there all articles of trade which they are obliged to go and seek at Surat, which, in this way, they can completely set aside.

At the first news here of the conquest of Salsette, Mr. Boddam at once embarked all the European troops present at Tellicherry for Bombay. There also arrived there later from Madras many battalions of sipahees who had the same destination. But in spite of these succours and the precautions which the English have taken to prevent that nothing that is happening in this part transpires by land, we know that they are very much embarrassed there, *that they absolutely lack money,* that Bombay is hard pressed by the Marathas who have, besides, an army of 80,000 men in the field between Surat and Bhadoch, and that Thana is blocked so closely that no one can go out.

We have just had confirmation of all this news by a Portuguese ship from Goa which arrived at Mahé on the 16th instant. Moreover, we learnt from this ship that at the beginning of April, this army of 80,000 men had attacked the English near Bhadoch and had won over them a complete victory. Raghoba, grand-uncle of the young Prince recognized as King by the Marathas, and who conspired and has drawn this war, on his nation, was on the point of being made a prisoner while returning to Bhadoch with the remnants of the English army.

Six weeks back, I received two letters from the Marathas addressed to the Commandant at Mahé, one in the name of the King himself and the other from his Minister. These letters are merely complimentary. They only announce that the two agents, who are to deliver them, will inform the Governor of the mission with which they are charged. These two agents told me that they were sent by their King to propose to the (French) nation a treaty of alliance with the Marathas to wage war on the English on the condition that they would undertake to put us in possession of all the English establishments on the Malabar Coast and that if we needed 30 to 40 lakhs to undertake this war, they would make this amount available to us.

I contented myself with replying to them that we would desire nothing so much as a treaty of alliance with the Marathas, but that the one they proposed involved engagements which I was not authorized to enter into, that I was going to forward their proposals to Pondicherry and that I would punctually convey to them M. Law's reply.

Mahé, 31st May 1775 REPENTIGNY

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Two Memorials

1780 – 1781

At the first news here of the capture of Salsette, Mr. Bodeam at once embarked all the European troops present at Tellicherry for Bombay. There also arrived there later from Madras many battalions of sepoys who had the same destination. But in spite of these succours and the precautions which the English have taken to prevent that nothing that is happening in this part transpires by land, we know that they are very much embarrassed there, *that they absolutely lack money*, that Bombay is hard pressed by the Marathas who have, besides, an army of 80,000 men in the field between Surat and Broach, and that Thana is blocked so closely that no one can go out.

We have just had confirmation of all this news by a Portuguese ship from Goa which arrived at Mahé on the 18th instant. Moreover, we learnt from this ship that at the beginning of April this army of 80,000 men had attacked the English near Broach and had won over them a complete victory. Raghoba, grand-uncle of the young Prince recognized as King by the Marathas, and who conspired and has drawn this war on his nation, was on the point of being made a prisoner while returning to Broach with the remnants of the English army.

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Mahé, 31st May 1775 REPENTIGNY

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C^5 153, f. 37-44v°

MEMORIAL (1780)

Indispensable and absolute necessity to make an attempt against the English possessions in India; facility of making it against their establishment of Bombay on the Malabar Coast and their other establishments on this coast. Very clear likelihood of complete success—Consequences of the greatest advantage that would result from it.

By an officer who took part in the last war in India.

Since the treaty of 1763, we have experienced and felt the fatal consequences of the ill-starred war of 1756 in India, more especially than anywhere else. The fall of Pondicherry has demonstrated to the whole of India and to all the powers of Europe, who are carrying on trade in this country, that it was the only obstacle which the English had to remove to rule and hold full sway there. All the Indian princes have successively come under their yoke. And the trade of all the European nations there has been under the most complete control of this dominating power. The only means left for them to carry on their trade there is to buy goods from the English factories and through the hands of the English factors.

Formerly, when the Indian princes were masters in their own territories, they considered each European nation, carrying on trade in India, only as a trading nation and the establishments of these nations were viewed by these princes only as trading towns. At that time, every European nation, according to its industry and means, could push on its trade and make it prosper, in spite of the competition and jealousy of other nations.

But to-day when the English are masters everywhere in this country, when they rule on the Coromandel Coast in the name of the Nawab of the Carnatic, when they command on the Orissa Coast in the name of the Subhedar of the Deccan, when they have made and maintained in Bengal, in spite of the opposition of the whole Mughal Empire, a subhedar in whose name they command to the farthest corners of India, when, in short, everything has come under their yoke, is it not natural that the glory of trade should only subsist for this dominating nation, especially as it can, quite at ease, put whatever obstacle it likes in that of any other nation, either by itself, or through the agency of the native princes who, only being their figure-heads, will always follow their views

and their orders? And we know well enough that this jealous power will never relax its advantages so long as it maintains its predominance.

Thus, if the situation of affairs remains what it is to-day, it is easy to conclude that trade and the advantages (resulting from it) in this country can be the monopoly of the English. Even if we conclude peace to-day, on whatever condition it is made, our trade will be none the less destroyed, or subjected to the same disadvantages to which it has been since the last treaty.

Moreover, it has always been necessary for the trade of this country that the nations of Europe, who want to carry on trade there, should enjoy a certain stability and a certain consideration. As this consideration, this stability, subsists to-day for England alone, there remains for the other nations nothing but discredit and humiliation. I therefore conclude, so far as we are concerned, that since the misfortunes of the last war have caused us to lose all consideration and all stability in these quarters, it is necessary for us to exert ourselves to recover these advantages, if we wish to continue to carry on trade there. But let us not labour under a delusion; it is only by having recourse to war that we can recover them. I therefore assert that it is necessary to profit by these circumstances or some others to succeed therein. I maintain that they will be soon regained, soon recovered, if by some brilliant enterprise we dare to attack the English establishments.

To insist on this necessity, I shall venture to add that it is in the immense revenues which the English have acquired in India that they find their most genuine resources for the onerous war they are supporting, which can enable them to continue it still longer, either by actual funds which they obtain from them or by the profits of their trade in India, which has become exclusive, or by their huge and infinite credit which the brilliant situation of their East India Company gives them vis-a-vis the whole commercial and financial Europe. However, I dare say that this resource to-day so secure, these revenues so immense, would soon be reduced to a most precarious condition if we dare make an attempt against them. From the moment of our earliest successes, we shall see the Indian princes shake off their chains, appear ready to co-operate with us for the ruin of their oppressors. And if only we knew how to employ direction and skill therein, we could make this attempt with the means and at the expenses of these princes.

The governors and commandants of our establishments in India during the recent war have today returned to France. They must have enlightened the Government on the real situation of affairs in distant countries. I dare presume that their opinion concurs with mine. I call them to witness on what I have just stated as well as on what is going to follow from it.

In accordance with this necessity, which I think I have demonstrated, to attack the English in India, from which point should we commence? At the commencement of the war, I already took the liberty to present a memorial and I dared to advise the attack on Bengal. But I had taken for granted the preservation of Pondicherry from where we could have moved among the Indian princes and prepared them for our arrival in force. Pondicherry is lost; we must therefore change our plan. We must indeed remember that in this country we ought to begin by a brilliant expedition and that we must succeed in it. It is only after this first success that we shall see the Indians ready to support us. Therefore today I propose the attack on Bombay.

If we attack the English on the Coromandel Coast or in Bengal, we will find them there with all their forces and with all their resources, both naval and military. And from the first steps which are most hazardous and most difficult, I declare that we shall be left to ourselves and to our means alone. At Bombay, it is no longer the same thing. The English there are openly at war with the Marathas, their neighbours, the only power in India which has maintained its independence.

The cause of this war is that the English having entirely fulfilled their project of subjugating everything in all the parts in which the Mughals rule, they had only to subdue this Malabar Coast on which the Marathas predominate. The question therefore was to bring them under their yoke. Aided by a party which they created among this nation, so far the attempt has not been successful. But they are not the people to balk at this first failure. They will indeed return to it and sooner or later succeed. The same policy and the same means which led them to success in other parts will lead them to the same end (in this case), if no other power opposes them. And it is only we who can do it effectively.

If therefore this Maratha nation found that we have arrived (in India) to attack Bombay, shall I not be justified in hoping and saying that it will help us therein? We are thus from the very first step joined by a most powerful all in India.

Moreover, the attack of Bombay requires smaller forces and means than that of the other English establishments, because if we choose our time properly, this place will be left to itself. On our part, we can arrive there without the enemy having the least knowledge about our approach. The naval forces of the enemy, whatever they may be, ought to be in some other station. And before they have news of the attack on Bombay, the place ought to be reduced and occupied by us. Thus, on our part, with a squadron almost equal to that of the enemy, we shall be sufficiently in force, either to help finish the expedition in the other parts of the coast, or protect the return or favour the subsequent operations which we would like to undertake, if we found the means for it.

The establishment of Bombay is situated in the island of this name, which is only about two leagues (8 kms.) in length by one less in width. I myself do not know either the place or the island. But ten of my comrades, after the capture of Pondicherry, were removed there. There were among them intelligent persons and who knew how to keep their eyes open. It is by following their opinion that I shall say that from the side of the sea and the port, the attack of the place is difficult and hazardous. But as the island is separated from that of Salsette only by an arm of the sea which is not broader than a very ordinary river, not so deep, fordable even at low tide in different spots, they all assured me that the entry and the descent in the island of Bombay is easy from this part. From the place of the landing, whatever it was, one would be barely two leagues away from this place. The island is almost entirely level and sandy, covered with cocoanut palms, with scattered dwellings of Indians and some gardens or houses of Europeans. The place on the side of the land had then only a simple enceinte, very small bastions without external outworks or even covered tracks. 1,000 to 1,200 Englishmen form its garrison. I do not know if, since this time, the English have strengthened its defences, but since this place has never been threatened by us, as we did not have any establishments within its reach to cause it jealousy or fear, I conjecture that the defences are in the same state, sufficient as they are against their neighbours.

For this expedition, I would propose a corps of landing force of about 4,000 men, in addition at least 300 artillery men and more, if it is possible, of which a good half would befrom Europe, selected fromall the branches which compose this corps—labourers, sappers, miners, in a suitable

proportion; engineers from Europe in proportion. I cannot trust only those from our Isles; the whole corps under experienced leaders.

I would like to join to it at least 1,200 cafrees [39] from our Isles, not raw cafrees. I would like to have them armed and placed in a company, 5 to 6 units of 100 men each, selected from those who are creoles [40], whom I would place under the command of European creoles or senior non-commissioned officers of troops from the colonies, who know how to handle and lead such men. The remaining cafrees would be attached to the artillery for doing any odd jobs.

Those who are armed would form excellent light troops to oppose the black troops of the enemy who would not dare resist ours, as soon as they recognise them. These men are capable of doing anything you want, if only those who lead them possess intelligence and courage. I had experience of it in the recent war.

The Isles of France and Bourbon are peerless places to secretly and silently prepare an expedition such as the one I propose. No other nation than ours lands there. The neighbouring island of Madagaskar furnishes them all the necessary provisions. I think that for such an expedition the most opportune time to get ready would be mid-July; a month later we could be at Bombay. We would still get five to six weeks to operate before the change of the monsoon; and after its change, the weather becomes all the more favourable either to return to the Isles or to continue subsequent operations. Moreover, at the time of departure, which I have indicated, we can attack Bombay without giving any indication of ourselves except by our very presence.

Meeting one's enemy in such an unexpected manner always causes a surprise by which the attacker ought to know how to profit, with the result that if the measures are properly taken, and we shall have ample time to take them, the descent in the island could be made without lot of expenses. In expeditions of such type, the first steps are of the greatest consequence. Today anything is possible, tomorrow everything becomes impossible. Hence the necessity for diligence and daring, if we want to succeed.

With the forces which I propose, I dare presume that Bombay cannot resist for a long time. As soon as it is captured, the first care of our commandant ought to be to conclude a treaty with the Marathas. We

could be sure of obtaining a very advantageous one. I would be of the opinion of offering them Bombay, after they had enabled us to expel the English from Surat and other establishments which they possess in these parts, after they had helped and supported us in these operations. In return for Bombay we could demand some post on this coast, useful for the trade of the nation. It had never had one, and yet this northern part of India is a location for the most extensive trade, not only with India but also with Persia, the Red Sea and the Eastern Coasts of Africa. The Marathas have expelled the Portuguese from several posts of this region, such as Chaul, Bassein and others which could suit us best and which could be repaired at little expense. At present, we could choose.

Similarly, immediately after the capture of Bombay, we should turn our attention to dispatching envoys to all the Mughal (Muslim?) courts to prepare them for the revolution by proclaiming to them our first exploit, likewise announcing to them the arrival of our forces in other parts of India. I think I have good reason to presume that from that time everything would stir, everything would be in movement, all would take measures to hasten the revolution. From this moment, the English will no more be able to collect the tribute except at the point of the sword. Not only would the Indian princes stir, because they are tired of the yoke of the English, but because by nature they are fond of change and revolutions. In the state of anarchy in which the Mughal State has fallen at present, each chief cherishes new hopes in these revolutions; each one thinks he can turn them to account and profit by them.

The different princes to whom I think we will have to address ourselves after the Marathas, should be Haider Ali Khan. This man, since the time of our misfortunes, has always shown friendship for the nation. During the period of peace, he is the first to dare oppose the English; he came and defied them to the gates of Madras. His establishments are in the south of the part in which we will have operated. Thus, it would be very important to get him interested again in our cause. By his aid, he can enable us to re-enter the Coromandel Coast. His kingdom is not only situated on the Malabar Coast, but I think he is the master of Mysore, a large province in the interior of the peninsula which borders on the Carnatic.

After him we should even tamper with the Nawab of the Carnatic. He is the prince from the territory in which are situated Madras and

Pondicherry. Unfortunately, we have always waged war against him and his family. Dupleix wanted to deprive the father to put Chandasaheb in his place. That was the cause of the whole war in India. Inspite of that, the son, tired of the yoke of the English, would have very much liked a reconciliation with us. M. de Bussy felt the necessity for it. At present, he ought to find the English yoke still harsher, since, reduced to a simple pension, only the title of the Nawab has been left to him. Nevertheless, he would still be very useful to us, by himself or through his brothers who possess good establishments in the province. It would thus appear to me essential to regain the friendship of this family.

As regards the region of Masulipatam and the Orissa Coast, we shall need the Subhedar of Golkonda, with whom we have had such long connections. As for Bengal, it is to Delhi itself that we must address ourselves. Thus, if war continued and success could lead us as far as Bengal, we must help the princes of this region to expel the English subhedar, a veritable intruder whom the whole of India never acknowledged, but in whose name the English have succeeded in subjugating everything.

Therefore our commander ought to know how to utilise circumstances and persons. War need no longer be waged at our expense. Dupleix supported his, much more by the subsidies of the Raja of Mysore and of other princes than by what the Company could furnish him. If he had also known how to conduct his war, if he knew how to utilise the resources of the country, he would certainly have fulfilled his great project, which is the same the English have so well executed; they picked it up from him. But Dupleix did not understand anything at all about war and because of that alone he failed.

I therefore say that if our commander knows how to conduct himself properly, instead of this war being a drag on us, except for the initial investment, I maintain that the expedition will even bring a great profit, from the mere pecuniary point of view, from the immense subsidies which it can procure. While working on his own projects, he can demonstrate to the Indian princes, whom he will win over to our cause, that it is their own interests that he was pursuing and their own projects that he was executing.

For that purpose, I would propose that we restored to the Indian princes the territories usurped by the English, confining ourselves, so far as we are concerned, to securing the establishments judged necessary for

our trade. We could indeed obtain some district around these establishments so that the maintenance of these establishments was not dependent on the neighbouring princes and that they were not totally a burden to us, but I would always insist on confining our possessions to what was strictly necessary for their maintenance and their subsistence. By this means, the jealousy of the native princes would not be aroused. These princes would consider us as their saviours, their liberators and their support, and I would advise for the future that we persist in this moderate position, maintain this policy as the surest, and no longer deviate from it. In France, it ought to be a principle of government so far as these distant possessions are concerned.

Before closing, I revert once again to the proof of the necessity of such an undertaking. I venture to say and I notice a sure means therein of snatching away Holland from the subjection in which she has been *vis-à-vis* England. The key-stone of Dutch greatness is in her establishments in India. In the superior position which the English have acquired there, the Dutch have greater reason than ever to placate them. They are aware that their weakness is due to the too great extension of these distant possessions. They know sufficiently well that the English ambition views them with a greedy and jealous eye. Particularly Ceylon is the cause of their greatest envy. The Dutch must be fully aware that the English, under the first pretext, could start a quarrel with them and secure what would be most suitable to them. I cite here what we could all learn, immediately after the capture of Pondicherry. As the Englishmen said publicly, Lord Pigot, Governor of Madras, intended to send to the Parliament a project of establishing the English Company under the name of ' Asiatic Company ', and he offered to put his nation in possession of all the trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope and to forbid in future its passage to all the rest of Europe. Myself, dining at the residence of the English commandant, who had made us all captives, I heard the whole conversation turning upon the Dutch possessions. The commandant even said that with 4,000 landing troops he would undertake to capture Ceylon and Batavia in the same campaign. I was sent to Negapatam, a Dutch post, until I was recalled for embarkation. The Dutch Governor, who welcomed us there and often treated us, revealed to us from time to time his grief on our fall and his anxiety for his nation in the future. Till then, however, he was credited with having shown great affection for the English. I therefore repeat that

the nation needs to be re-established in India on a respectable footing, not only because of its trade, but also to restore to it the consideration which it ought to enjoy; and if what I propose here is founded on reason, it can only be by having recourse to war that we can aspire to it. I would have thought that we have the favourable occasion in this one.

C^2 153, f. 66-69 v°

(1780 or 1781)

Historical abstract of the latest revolutions in India to serve as an introduction to the political system now prevailing in this Continent, followed by an approximate table of the forces of the four preponderent powers of this Empire.

The overthrow of the Mughal Empire can be ascribed to the invasion of Thamas Kouli Khan[41] in India which dates back only to the year 1739.

Muhammad Shah then occupied the throne of Delhi. The weakness of his character, and the intrigue and the ambition of his ministers prepared and directed this famous revolution, the outcome of which has been the overthrow of one of the finest and greatest Empires in the World.

The Nawabs and Governors of the provinces of the Empire, the majority of them became independent in their subhas and soon ceased to deliver to the Royal Treasury the revenues of the governments which were entrusted to their care. It is thus that the Emperor successively lost the provinces or subhas of the Empire, such as Punjab, Multan, Kabul, Kashmir, Sind, Gujarat, Bengal, Bihar, Dowtabad (Dowlatabad?), Marva (Malwa?), Berar, Orissa, Hyderabad, Bijapur, etc.

Everyone knows about the treaty which was then concluded between Tahmasp Quli Khan and Muhammad Shah, by which this feeble Emperor ceded to the tyrant of Persia the finest provinces watered by the Sindhu or the Indus.

Ahmad Abdali, at the head of Iranians, later usurped this dismemberment of the Mughal Empire, and soon formed an intermediary and ominous power between the kingdom of Persia and the Mughal Empire. This power extends itself in such a manner that it has since then caused

the Delhi Court to tremble by invasions which it led to the heart of the Capital. The last is dated February 8, 1760; the Marathas were defeated in it in a pitched battle.

Ahmad Abdali in fact wanted to confirm the choice of Jawan Bakht whom the Marathas had appointed as successor to the throne of Delhi. This young prince, eldest son of Ali Gohar, belonged to the family of Taimurlane.

This Ali Gohar is the same person whom the English Company later made Emperor of Delhi.

More recently still, there arose another power formed by people (the Sikhs) who came from the mountains[42] and who occupy the territory from Sirhind to Lahore which forms the boundary of the Kingdom of Taimur Shah.

Thus, the Mughal pressed in the north and the east by barbarous people finds a part of his provinces possessed by them and those of the south invaded by independent governors and the most ambitious of the European nations.

On October 23, 1764, there occurred a second revolution which can be considered as the epoch of the overthrow of the Mughal power, and as the most fatal in Hindustan, since it is the cause of the establishment of English domination in India.

Indeed, in a battle fought with the Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah, they defeated him completely and made Ali Gohar a prisoner and placed him on the throne of Delhi[43]; but this Prince detained as a captive in their camp served at first only to palliate their usurpation since they executed all their ambitious projects in his name. This mask since then having become useless to them, they facilitated his escape. The Padshah enjoys liberty at Delhi.

However, although the English have nothing to fear from the weakness of his character and from his passion for voluptuousness, they closely watch his steps. Najaf Khan, his great Vazir, since the last revolution, cannot indeed tolerate these imperious masters under whom he has served. Today he engages all their attention.

It is by this revolution that they made themselves absolute masters of Bengal where they possess rights of sovereignty by means of arrangements which it will be very long to enumerate here. I shall also not speak

of the successors of Muhammad Shah who successively occupied the throne of Delhi and of whom history will undoubtedly preserve the names only to serve as an epoch to the annals of this empire.

Besides, the brevity of this narration does not permit me to enter into the details; I hasten to come to the point, i.e. to relate briefly the present position of affairs and of the forces of the preponderent powers of this Empire.

The Emperor of Delhi, and after him the most powerful princes in India, are obliged to take the field every year in order to bring into their treasury the tributes which are due to them by the rajas and governors who are subjected to their domination.

The troubles and the anarchy which has been reigning since time immemorial in this vast continent have rendered one of the most flourishing Empires in the world an emaciated and languishing body of which the princes snatch away the spoils at will.

In the midst of this mass of interests so contrary, it appears, up to the present moment, that there can be four preponderent powers which constitute (if I may thus express myself) the political system of India; all the other princes being either subordinated and swept away by the superior movements of the former :

1. The Court of Delhi in the north of Hindustan.

2. The Court of Poona or the Marathas in almost all the parts of India, but particularly on the Malabar Coast where they keep the mass of their forces.

3. Nizam Ali or the Subhedar of the Deccan on the Orissa and Coromandel Coast, having his residence at Hyderabad.

4. Haider Ali Khan, a soldier risen from the ranks and a slave of Nizam Ali,[44] but whom his warlike genius has raised to the rank of one of the most redoubtable powers of India; he occupies the south of the continent from the Krishna, which separates him from Nizam Ali, to Cape Comorin.

These four powers are encompassed by the English forces who occupy in India almost all the coasts and the best ports, without including in it Bengal which alone constitutes a kingdom twice as large as the British Isles.

To these possessions could be added the kingdom of Shuja-ud-daulah, which they govern in the name of his son, as well as the conquests made in this quarter, so that the English stretch to the north, above the Mughal, and that they are visibly occupied in tightening the chain which they have extended on all the points of the circumference.

This is briefly the situation of affairs. Now from the geographical position of these powers, it is easy to see on which side it is convenient to establish our factories and fix the centre of our forces, with reference to national trade as well as to the protection which ought to be accorded to it in order to give it all the extension which it is capable of.

I think I have sufficiently demonstrated, in my Considerations on India, the advantages which the Malabar Coast offers us over all the others in order to dispense me with entering into the details on this subject. It suffices to know that the possession of Bombay definitely brings this coast into our subjection and puts us within reach of outstripping all the European powers in their political and military operations in India.

Thus it is with the Court of Poona that we ought to form friendship in preference to all the other powers, nevertheless by winning the goodwill of the most powerful princes of this Empire such as the Emperor of Delhi, in order to provide a diversion for ourselves in the north of Hindustan, Nizam Ali in the Deccan and Haider Ali in the south of the continent.

It is on this point that the Government should fix all its attention.

On winning the goodwill of all the Indian powers to keep in check the English power which will always try to surpass us in a continent where they have so many means combined together.

However powerful the English may be in India, we cannot overlook our advantages; they are immense if we wish to turn them to account.

We have in our favour the solemn promise of the princes and the tyrannical administration of the English Company, which makes this nation hateful to the natives. The grandees impatiently bear the burden of bondage, and the vexations have almost reduced the people to despair. Let us carry there the spirit of moderation, let us announce ourselves as friends, let us protect them against their enemies who are ours. It is the only means to restrain the ambition of the English, at least to carry on, in competition with them, the most flourishing trade in this part of the world.

NOTES

1. Governor-General of the Isles of France and Bourbon.
2. M. de Boynes had replaced M. le Duc de Praslin as minister for the Navy in the beginning of 1772.
3. These piracies were committed by Angre on his own and without the knowledge of the Central Government.
4. Law makes a mistake. The religion of Tibet is Buddhism.
5. Budge-Budge.
6. It is not possible to know the basis on which Law makes this statement.
7. Lenoir, Dumas, Dupleix and Deleyrit were Law's predecessors as Governors of Pondicherry.
8. Law's prediction comes true in 1799.
9. Monseigneur de Terray was Controller-General for Finance.
10. This seems to be a mistake. Tanjaour was captured by the English on September 17, 1773. At this time, it was Raghoba who was planning the invasion of the Carnatic. He had even proceeded as far as Bidar. But he had to retrace his steps when he heard about the revolution which had taken place at Poona. But the author is evidently mixing up the event of 1771 when Tanjaour was attacked by the English but the Raja was allowed to retain possession of his kingdom on certain terms. On that occasion, if the Maratha forces retired from the Karnatak, that is because of the serious illness of the Peshwa Madhavrao. But in neither case did the Maratha forces retire from the Karnatak because of the revolution at Delhi.
11. Bidar?
12. Shirpi or Sira.
13. M. de Sartine took over as Minister for the Navy in the beginning of 1775.
14. Major Browne.
15. Why should Bellecombe suspect that his Government had overlooked this particular? In fact, they had dispatched M. de St. Lubin to Poona and M. de Montigny to Delhi to prepare the ground, and they were definitely planning to send an expedition to India.
16. Bellecombe forgets that with 10,000 cavalry, Haider brought the English to submission.
17. Bellecombe seems to refer to the conduct of Visaji Krishna Biniwale and Gopalrao Patwardhan, two Maratha sardars operating in the south at the time of the fall of Pondicherry in 1761. They did display mercenary attitude and wanted

to make some money at the cost of the French or the English. This was possible because their master was occupied with the affairs of the north and had no time to pay attention to the south. But on this occasion, the situation would be different. It is the Central Government which would have dispatched Maratha forces to the south with a specific purpose, viz. to help the French. There was no question of a Maratha chief operating on his own.

18. Ravaging the territory was the only tactics possible for the Indians to force the English to submit. If that objective was reached, is it not rendering service to the French?

19. Bellecombe is obviously referring to the events of 1775-1776 in Gujarat. But he forgets that it was the rivalry between the two Gaikwad brothers which gave the English a handle to interfere in their affairs and thus create a diversion in favour of Raghoba, their protégé, in Gujarat. But neither the Gaikwad nor the Bhonsle of Nagpur would leave their kingdom to help the English against the Poona Government.

20. This is argument for argument's sake. The house of Bhonsle was at this time considerably weakened by the domestic trouble, and although it behaved independently of the Central Government, it was incapable of making any move on its own initiative.

21. Bellecombe means the Sikhs.

22. Better known as Dhousa.

23. Chitaldroog.

24. De La Brillane succeeded M. le Chevalier Desroches as Governor-General of the Isles of France and Bourbon.

25. Sir Thomas Rumbold, Governor of Madras.

26. The Maratha agent seems to be hoodwinking his querists. There was no plan to enter the Coromandel Coast at this time. The Peshwa's aim was first to destroy Haider Ali completely before attacking the English and Muhammad Ali, their protégé.

27. Picot forgets that the English could not have destroyed the power of the Angre without the powerful support of the Peshwa Balajirao.

28. There was no desertion. St. Lubin had removed 100 men from the crew of the ship le Sartine to serve as a personal guard for himself.

29. Perhaps the copyist's mistake for 'fourth'.

30. This is not correct. On the other hand, the Madras Government, in the beginning of 1767, and the Bombay Government, in November of the same year, had made overtures for an alliance to Madhavrao but they were rejected. (G. S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, pp. 513, 549.)

31. Lagrenée seems to be in the habit of contradicting himself.

32. In the actual proposals (pp. 47-48), there is no mention that the Marathas wanted the French to join them to besiege and capture Haider Ali.

33. Foot-soldiers, descendants of the Portuguese who have married Indian women; they were so called because of the hats they wear.

34. Admiral Harland.

35. Haider agreed to pay 31 lakhs of rupees in cash and surrender a large part of the territory south of the river Tungabhadra.

36. The French seem to call all south Indians as Malbarees, whether they hail from the Malabar Coast or the Coromandel Coast. Really speaking Lagrenée refers to Tamilians.

37. Lagrenée contradicts what he says in the previous dispatch. See Note No. 31.

38. This is a mistake for 3,24,800 frs.

39. Negroes from French Africa; they were good soldiers.

40. French settler in Madagaskar, Mauritius or India.

41. Tahmasp Quli Khan, better known as Nadir Shah.

42. These were originally Hindus; they did not come from the mountains.

43. This is not correct. It is the Marathas who placed Ali Gohar on the throne of Delhi and not the English.

44. There is no evidence to show that Haider was originally a slave of Nizam Ali.

to make any attempt [illegible] of the French [illegible]
[illegible] at any attention [illegible] Central Government which would have dispatched Maratha forces [illegible] of a Maratha chief operating [illegible]

18. Ravaging the territory was the only tactics possible for the [illegible] English [illegible]. If that objective was reached, is it not rendering service to the French?

19. Bellecombe [illegible] referring to the events of 1775-1776 in Gujarat. But he [illegible] English a handle to interfere in their affairs and thus create a diversion in favour of Raghoba, their protégé, in Gujarat. But neither the Gaikwad nor the Bhonsle [illegible] Government.

20. This is suggested for argument's sake. The house of Bhonsle was at this time [illegible] weakened by [illegible] independently of the Central Government [illegible] on its own initiative.

21. Bellecombe means the Sikhs.

22. Better known as Dhonda.

23. Chinnoroog.

24. [illegible] M. le Chevalier [illegible] Governor-General of the Isles of France and Bourbon.

25. Sir Thomas Rumbold, Governor of Madras.

26. The Maratha agent seems to be hoodwinking his querists. There was no plan to enter the Coromandel Coast at this time. The Peshwa's aim was first to destroy Haider Ali completely before attacking the English and Muhammad Ali, their protégé.

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FRENCH RECORDS

(Pertaining to the History of the Marathas)

VOLUME IV

Correspondence of Jean Baptists Chevalier
Director of French Establishments
in Bengal, 1767–78
and Others

Translated & Edited

By

Dr. V. G. Hatalkar

Jean Baptiste Chevalier

Director of the French Settlements in Bengal

1767 – 78

C^2 100, f. 159-174v°

Plan of attack in India in case of an offensive war

Chandernagore, 15th March 1769

If the French Minister one day plans to make a conquest of India, or at least humble and even destroy there the rival nation which is today in possession of it, it is in Bengal that the first blows must be struck. Once master of this kingdom, Madras and Bombay will automatically fall. This truth is self-evident, when it is considered that these two establishments are supported only by the resources of Bengal which simultaneously furnishes them everything, men, provisions and money. In fact, Bengal is the root and trunk of the tree, Madras and Bombay are only its branches; once the sap ceases to circulate, it is clear that they must dry up and perish. The English will receive forces, they will receive squadrons, but if they no more have Bengal, with what will they make them subsist and how will they pay them, if they have neither supplies nor money ?

Once this principle is granted, there are two ways of operating in this important affair, and both will lead to sure success, if men, who, with all the necessary wisdom, prudence and love of national weal, also possess deep topographical knowledge, are placed at its head. It is especially this last quality which ought to engage the Ministry's full attention while making its selection. Since it is certain that among the Asiatics success is achieved more through court intrigue and by contacts with the native princes and chiefs than through battles and victories, and it is for this reason that I do not hesitate to advance here as a patent truth that a person who has lived for a long time in India, who enjoys a reputation acquired among its people and especially who speaks its languages, (for, I also mention this article as an essential point) will succeed in it with much greater facility than any other new comer from Europe. Even if the latter possessed all possible intelligence, penetration and sagacity, and even if he was always a hero in battles and attended with victory, it is certain that if he were ignorant of the locality, manners, customs and constitutions, he will commit mistakes and blunders of the greatest consequence and likely to lead to the failure of the enterprise. Whilst the other always guided by principles based on his knowledge cannot

make mistakes. Sure of all his resources, nothing can embarrass him, because he will have foreseen in advance all the events and simultaneously prepared all the springs which ought to set into motion the body of the machine.

Perhaps it might be fancied that what I say here is only a device to suggest that it is on me that the choice should fall. It would be a mistake. M. Law, Governor-General, has all the desirable qualities to fulfil all the objects which I have stated. He enjoys a great reputation among the Muslim princes, he is known at the Delhi Court; it is he who must be chosen. I may be given ünder his command any role. I shall always be delighted to support him and to be under his orders. Unity and harmony, so rare among Frenchmen today, will completely prevail between him and me (I can give this assurance), and after that everything is bound to meet with a happy success. But while putting M. Law at the head of the enterprise, care should be taken to avoid placing under him persons from Europe who are too superior in rank or who, relying on their personal influences, would like to forcibly predominate everything, behave arbitrarily and neither know obedience nor subordination; that is a sure way of spoiling everything; jealousy and dissensions will seize the minds, intrigue will be the guiding principle, there will only be factions and different parties, and consequently, everything will be thrown into confusion and we ourselves shall be the cause of our misfortune. There ought to be a single power; if it is divided, the one will harm the other; its collisions are always prejudicial. The navy wants to command the land forces or at least is jealous of them; the land forces detest the administrator or refuse to obey him; the latter revolts and defends his rights; thus there are three parties formed and which are occupied in only seeking means to destroy one another; they lose sight of the common cause, the national weal is sacrificed to self-interest and to resentment, and finally they are seen behaving positively as if they all did not belong to the same master and to the same nation. It is to these causes that we owe to the greatest extent the misfortunes in India under which we are still groaning; the other causes which have contributed to them are secondary; all have originated from the primary cause.

The English, in the whole course of the last war, have taught us our lesson in India, and I consider it too good for us not to seek to follow it.

They sent squadron commanders and King's officers to command the land forces and both were always amenable to the Councils established in India or at least to the *ad hoc* Committees to which only the commandants of the army and the navy were admitted, and even in many cases, the latter were not admitted to them at all. The Council or the Committee took decisions on the most important and most advantageous operations to be undertaken; once the decision was taken, they communicated it to the commandants of the corps; from that moment no chance for an answer; they (the commandants) had to obey and only occupy themselves with the means to succeed in the operation which was ordered, under penalty to those who had refused to march for being personally responsible for it. They were immediately prosecuted and the punishment followed close upon the offence. Why should it not be the same with us ? And why should officers of high rank refuse to be submitted to the Councils ? Is it not natural to think that those who form them, having spent all their youth in this country, have acquired all the essential knowledge and that indeed they are therefore in a better position to sainly form an opinion on the decisions to be taken, and on the more or less big advantages that would result from them? But since it is a prejudice established among our nation and which a man holding a high military rank will never get rid of, being too blinded by his ambition or by such other motives which guide him to cut short everything, the Minister, instead of employing persons of this standing, can merely send excellent officers of subaltern's rank, such as skilful majors or at the most lieut.-colonels on whom he will impose the duty to be submitted to the Councils or to the Committees. They will willingly acquiesce in it, especially when they are assured, it must be added, of a just reward for their good conduct or for their good actions. Moreover, these persons in the sphere to which I have referred will have more considerations to think of; their credit will not be as ......; their ambition and their cupidity will be more limited, they will be satisfied with having in prospect a modest fortune which can induce them to return one day and enjoy quietly the deserved fruit of their labours. It is not the same with persons of high standing; they have to restore a family, repair a sunken fortune and considering themselves in some manner above the laws, they will venture many means which an ordinary man will not dare employ because he will always be restrained by fear and by the account which he knows he will have to give if he misbehaves.

While thus establishing Councils and Committees to decide all affairs, I do not claim that in all the cases, without exception, the person who will be at the head of affairs, should depend upon them to such an extent that he can do nothing on his own account, and that he ought to communicate everything. There are occasions when everything depends on secrecy and when, if the smallest secret were divulged, that was sufficient to cause the failure of the whole enterprise, but these occasions are rare. When they occur, the chief ought to have the liberty to act on his own, except to hold himself responsible for his particular mistakes. There are also other occasions when he ought to predominate in the Council; it is when opinions are divided, or when he sees so clearly the benefit that he has no doubt about the result if the opinion he puts forth is followed; in that case if the views are contrary to him, he ought to have the power to decide boldly and undertake the responsibility for the event, being, however, obliged to give his well-founded opinion in writing along with that of the other members who are opposed to him.

All secret correspondence ought to be handled by him alone, but he should communicate to the Council the events and the state of affairs. Besides, every councillor must be forbidden from communicating with the native princes without the permission of the chief. It is one more point which the English have very wisely laid down and which they follow very scrupulously and thereby they have corrected a number of abuses which often brought them on the brink of ruin. A man who had his private correspondence established with the native princes received from them overtures followed by promises of handsome presents if he succeeded in obtaining what was desired of him; he formed a party in the Council, stirred, plotted in order to obtain the reward promised to him; the result was nothing but venality and corruption.

This is a long preamble; I considered it necessary to establish the administration which I believe most suitable in the case of war. I now turn to the two ways of attacking Bengal to which I have referred above. I shall discuss them separately by throwing into the just balance the drawbacks and the advantages of the two methods which will be deemed advisable to prefer. The first is to execute on a large scale by sending forces so superior to the enemy whom we want to attack that it must be battered at once. This requires great preparations of armaments, a large number of vessels, men and money since it would be necessary to

dispatch about 5,000 troops so that there will arrive in Bengal 4,000 in good health and ready to fight from the moment the ships have cast anchor. Likewise it would be necessary to have a corps and a train of artillery proportionate to the number of troops as well as labourers to lay siege to the fortress of Calcutta which is the only one to which it would have to be laid in Bengal. The English in Europe, who are bound to get information of all these preparations, would as a matter of course try to fathom the motives behind this move and their anxiety could lead them to send their squadrons to sea to intercept this one (that of the French) and prevent it from reaching its destination. But supposing that this (the English squadron) is not likely to stop (the French squadron), and that the Ministry adopts the plan of dispatching all these troops which I demand here, this is the manner of proceeding to its execution. As soon as the vessels arrive at the mouth of the Ganges, the required number composed of the lightest ships will be detached to land 1,000 good soldiers in the river of Chatigan (Chittagong); these, without losing any time, will seize this English establishment which is not all fortified and where they will meet with no resistance, the garrison being composed only of about a hundred Europeans and of a battalion of 600 sipahees; and the ships which will have landed them will return to join the main body of the squadron which will have entered the Ganges to lay siege to Calcutta. It will go up to opposite Maconatana, a ruined fortress formerly built by the Mussalmans, situated on the western bank of the river and distant from Calcutta by about three leagues (12 kms.) by land.

It is opposite this fortress that the landing of the troops ought to take place; it will be carried out easily being protected by the ship's cannon; there is not even a likelihood that the enemy would make its appearance to oppose it. The troops, once thay are landed and ready to march, will advance to capture the approaches of the English fort; if the enemy feels strong enough, it will come to meet (the French ships); that is the decisive moment, a battle will be fought in which it is possible that we will be victorious since we shall have 3,000 men against at the most 1,200 which today form all the English forces; I almost count for nothing their sipahees, even if they were 10,000 or more in number; they will take to flight at the first discharge, and especially if we appear to rush upon them with the bayonets at the tip of the gun. The result then will be that

the English will soon be forced to take refuge in their fortress to endure a siege; this place requires that it is laid systematically; it is strong as can be judged from the plan which I sent last year to M. le Ducde Praslin; however, the revetment on the side of the river having been badly bedded in its not so solid foundations, the English themselves confess that it will crumble by the jerk of the cannon; whether that is so or not, it will not prevent our troops from laying the siege, and if it is judged that the French forces are not in sufficient strength to carry the place by assault, it can be converted into a blockade, and we must try to capture it by starving it, which will not be difficult in course of time, since it is certain that from the moment we shall have shut up the English in their walls, all the native people will declare themselves in our favour, and their hatred against this nation will over and above support our views and our designs. When the place is encircled from the side of the land, the provisions cannot enter, and by sea our squadron and our ships will close all the passages. Whilst it will be thus besieged or blocked, and whilst the English forces will have enough occupations to defend themselves in their own quarters, the thousand men which will have been left at Chittagong and which will have seized it, will make progress with the money they will have found in the English treasury and the help which the country will offer them. The commander will take care to make a solid retrenchment in the mountains in which there are positions so fortified by nature that they are unassailable. At the same time, he will raise the largest possible number of sipahees and get them exercised with all possible promptitude to utilize them at once; simultaneously he will send a detachment to seize the adjoining districts of Boulonais, Jougdia and the English factory of Loquipour (Laksmipur). This detachment will lay all this territory under contribution and the collection will serve for the daily expenses. Chittagong annually pays a revenue of three lakhs, and Boulonais, Jougdia and the neighbouring territory nearly eight to ten. Masters of this territory, all the necessary provisions, for this detachment as well as for the squadron and the troops before Calcutta, will be abundantly obtained from it, and these provisions could very easily reach Calcutta by boats by passing through the jungles of Sundy from Loquipour to Calcutta. There is just eight or ten days' journey during fine weather; more time is necessary during bad weather and the risks for the boats are considerable, but recourse can be had to the launches on the Ganges which safely sail in all these places.

In order to seize these districts of Boulonais and Jougdia, we have only to make our appearance; there are no troops; no necessity therefore to fire a single shot. Advance should next be made in the direction of the town of Dacca which can be captured with the same facility, and to prevent the English of this factory from saving their goods and their persons, care should be taken to have two launches cruise between Dacca and Banquibazard, which will have orders not to allow any boat to pass. The Muslim Government of Dacca is without forces and without garrison, and moreover, burning with hatred against the English and thus far from offering any resistance, it will voluntarily surrender to us, expecially if we take care to announce ourselves as liberators who are dispatched only to release the people from their bondage and restore to them their liberty. For this purpose, it will be essential to prevent the troops from plundering and committing the least disorder. It is by clemency, justice, moderation and good discipline that we ought to seek to subdue them, and point out to them the difference between our Government and that which the English exercise with so much tyranny; that will not prevent the Nawab and the inhabitants of the town from not contributing to furnish for our expenses and for the payment of our troops, but in this matter, there is a way of operating without revolting the people; we will have only to let them tax themselves and if the sum which they are in a position to furnish does not suffice for our needs, it can be easily made up by raising loans which can be repaid afterwards by subsequent adjustments to be made, or from the revenue of the territory as it enters our treasury.

Masters of Dacca, the first step to be taken will be to liberate from the prison the children of Sufrascan[1] (formerly Nawab of Bengal) and the legitimate heirs to the throne from which they were deposed only by the usurpation of Alivardi Khan, grand-father of Siraj-ud-daulah. This family of Sarfraz Khan is even today dear to the people who always relate proudly and with tender tears, the wisdom, the gentleness and the equity of his Government by pointing him out as a model to all their princes; moreover, it has still many followers. The princes to whom I refer will be of little use to us in our affairs; nourished and brought up in the prisons since their tender age, they have neither acquired knowledge nor experience, but it will suffice us to put forward their name, and we should derive from this phantom all the advantages we shall need. This

is how we can make first use of it; we shall summon the Nawab of Murshidabad to join our party, which he will accept without hesitation—I would dare assure it from the hatred he bears to the English and the dissatisfaction he feels for them—but supposing that because of ill advice or for reasons of fear or in fact for other motives, he refuses our offers, we would threaten him with our *indignation* and begin by proclaiming at Dacca the elder son of Sarfraz Khan by name Aga Baba. This man would soon collect a party which would line up under his standard and which would furnish him troops and money; afterwards we would have him recognised in all the parts lying to the east of the Ganges, at Dinajpur, Peronia, Belia and all along the river from Borompouter to Barband Bitter-Baud and Rangamaly which is the province bordering on the kingdom of Assam. All this part of Bengal is the richest for the revenue as well as for commerce, and would alone put us in a state not only to defray our expenses but also furnish us the cargo necessary for Europe, for while this war lasted, it would not be impossible to apply ourselves to commerce and load the vessels with merchandise.

Whilst we would take care to bring all these districts under our power, we would not leave the western part quiet unless the Nawab of Murshidabad surrendered to us; then the war would soon end and we would at once succeed in our goal, that is to say in becoming masters of the whole territory ; the Nawab would join to us not his forces because he hasn't any, but his money, credit and influence, and the English who, during the whole course of all these events, would continue to be blocked, would soon be forced to capitulate for want of succour and resources. In case the Nawab (which is not probable) would persist in being attached to their (of the English) side, the smallest force would suffice to subdue him. But if we needed our troops elsewhere and if it was necessary for us to subdue the rest of the country hostile to us, we should reinforce ourselves by means of alliances. We should count in advance on Shuja-ud-daulah, ruler of the territory which is known under the denomination of Benares [2]; he is sincerely attached to the (French) nation as much out of inclination as out of interest, and I sufficiently know his dispositions to vouch that he is only waiting for the favourable moment to declare himself on our side. Today he is the only powerful prince in the vicinity of Bengal ; his heart is full of rage against the English for all the humiliations which they have made him suffer from the bondage to which they have reduced him and in

fact, for all the affronts which he has received from them. The last treaty, which they have just obliged him to endorse, especially hurts him most; he considers it as a stain on his reputation; they have forced him to disband 30,000 of his troops and to keep only 2,000 without the possibility of ever augmenting the number, in addition not to allow either any Frenchman or European in his state. He revolted at these proposals and swore that he would perish rather than submit to them; the English army at once appeared on his frontiers; he was not at all prepared either for war or for any event of this kind; he had no alternative; he had to bow down before necessity whilst more favourable circumstances restore to him his liberty.

In addition to the alliance of Shuja-ud-daulah, we should also count on having on our side the Emperor dethroned and forced to live in a corner of the state of Banares [2] with the annual and modest pension which he receives from the English who hold him in their fetters. He is the prince with whom M. Law fought all his campaigns. He has been trifled with and scoffed at by the English who, on the promises they had given him to restore him to the throne of his ancestors, occupied by his son under the protection of the Pathans, obtained from him the sovereignty of Bengal; as soon as they received from him what they desired, they broke their word with him and for all compensation, they allocated to him only the pension on which he lives; moreover, even that is paid badly enough. He would not be of much use to us, because he has himself neither forces nor money, but his name would always be of great weight to favour all our intrigues and our policy. Besides, perhaps one day it could suit the interests of the nation to restore him to his place.

The Marathas of Cuttack are sworn enemies of the English; this year they threatened Bengal with an invasion which would have been executed if division had not taken place among the chiefs of the army [3]. The chief amongst them had even made overtures to me in writing and proposed to me to leave us half of Bengal or an equivalent annual revenue for the Company, if I would furnish him men and munitions which he needed to succeed in the conquest of Bengal which he meditated. I have eluded the request with honest pretexts, but his dispositions are always the same and we can make use of him according to the need to have in our party a troop as plundering and as ruinous to the territory.

Kasim Ali Khan, whom the English have driven from Bengal, has taken shelter with the Jats where he is moving heaven and earth to collect a party capable of re-establishing him in his kingdom. As long as he lives, he can be considered as the most inveterate enemy of the English. He is a great intriguer and well versed in all the politics of the princes of Hindustan, and we could derive from it a very great advantage. Several of the principal Pathan chiefs have a goodwill for him; two amongst them, one by name Donnedekhan[4] and another A Fez-Ramul-Khan[5], son-in-law of Najib-ud-daulah, to day Vazir of Delhi, have written to me to find out if we would like to ally ourselves with them in his favour. They offer all their forces and appear determined to enter Bengal. Kasim Ali Khan himself writes to me the same thing and makes similar proposals to me to which I have only replied by evasions. It is easy to judge thereby the state of mind of the people and the facility with which to bring them to our side.

To unite all these forces under our standard and to form all these alliances, it would cost us little of our own. The mere pleasure of being able to satisfy their hatred and their vengeance against the English would draw all these people towards it. As for the expenses which are indispensable to produce all these revolutions, the country itself would furnish them, and I dare say that there is not a soul in Bengal who would not contribute with all his heart to facilitate through our channel, the total expulsion of the English nation. All the people from the biggest to the smallest are tired of their yoke and can no longer bear it; they are only waiting for a favourable occasion to give vent to their sentiments, and it is in the French alone that they place all their confidence for their deliverance. A single banker, by name Jagatshet, would unreluctantly open all his treasures which are immense; he is credited with still possessing more than hundred millions of wealth.

It would be difficult, with all the forces which we would thus have at our disposal by ourselves as well as by our allies, for Calcutta to hold on for a long time, all the more because once blockaded and the English reduced to a state when they can longer obtain abundantly all their usual provisions, it is certain that all their sipahees will abandon them. Moreover, there is a sure way to force them to do so; they are all from Bengal, have their wives, their children and their families there. We would have therefore only to threaten them (the sipahees) to kill them

(their families) there if they did not abandon the party of the English; this fear alone will suffice to force them to obey.

Once Calcutta surrenders, we should at once demolish the fort and with the debris construct two forts opposite each other on the two banks of the river at Maconatana, with double and triple batteries. The river is very narrow at this spot and nothing will be easier to close the passage to vessels with iron chains, and by this means we shall be sheltered from being attacked by the English squadron, if there arrived one during the time all that I have just stated would take place in Bengal. We must use all sorts of means to raise against the English all the possible number of enemies, as many on the Coromandel Coast as at Bombay, in order to prevent them by this diversion from sending succour to Bengal. The thing would not be difficult; they are not more loved in this part of India than in Bengal. Haider Naik is their sworn enemy and his conduct proves it. He can be easily put in our interests by a treaty which should be advantageous to him. Nizam Ali, Nawab of the Deccan, will do likewise and willingly join us. On the side of Bombay, we must incite the Marathas against them, which can always be done with money.

So far I have only presented the good side of things and as if the success had been achieved. Now let us foresee the reverse and suppose that the army, which I have had landed at Maconatana to lay siege to Calcutta, meets with ill success which hinders it from undertaking anything. In this case, what decision should we take? Here it is. We must unite them (our forces) all at Chittagong which will always serve as a sure retreat and where it will be impossible to attack us. This place shall form our establishment and it will be solid, and with the forces we will have there and the resources which it will furnish us, we can always at least subdue the most precious half of Bengal which is the eastern part and it will not be in the power of the English to prevent us from doing so. They would be fortunate if they can preserve the western part against the huge number of enemies which we can raise against them on this side.

I have just discussed the expedition of Bengal on a large scale; I have unfolded the means for operating, the forces necessary to succeed, the success which we ought to expect, the reverses which can take place and the resources which we can procure. But as I have said it, it might happen that because of obstacles difficult to surmount, it might not be easy for our Government to dispatch troops and forces in as great

a number as I demand. So now let us have a plan on a smaller scale, slower in its progress, but at the same time easier to execute and none the less sure in the result.

For this one we must only have 1,500 Europeans and a thousand caffirs[3] which would be taken at Mauritius. As it is necessary to act with the greatest secrecy, vessels must not leave at all from France; that would only serve to give umbrage to England. But under different pretexts we would dispatch from here to the Isle of France all the private ships of the shippers of India, which the Governor, who alone would possess the key to the secret, would freight for the account of the so-called Company. For this purpose he would publicly announce plans of private shipping-business to which he would assign these ships. Even the Captains would not know their destination, of which they would be informed only after their departure and in the latitude which would be indicated to them to open and read their instructions. Moreover, they would be made to depart after one another in order to remove all suspicion. Besides, the plan will be all the easier to attain because three-fourths of the private ships of the nation belong to M. Law and to me.

They would then proceed to the Isle of France in the manner which I have just indicated and the Governor (at the Isle of France), who would have received the order in advance, would have prepared all the troops intended for the expedition and all the provisions necessary for the voyage. He would get everything shipped at once, and if the number of ships was not sufficient, he would join to them the Royal store ships. All this small squadron, which would consist of about fifteen ships and even more, would have the order to march together without being separated. A single ship will be detached to pick up M. Law, if it is he who is appointed to command. He would embark on it with as much secrecy as possible, leaving the necessary orders to the person who would remain at Pondicherry in his absence, and would go and join the squadron which would be waiting for him in the direction of the Andamans, or such other spot which would be deemed most suitable to mark as a meeting place, however, always taking care to select one which would be away from all communication with the English and the Dutch factories. Simultaneously with the intimation given to M. Law, I must also receive similar one by an advice-boat on which I would also proceed to the place of the squadron to give information about the actual position of Bengal and

supply all the information necessary for the success of the expedition. To act with greater secrecy, I would make believe a hunting party at the lower end of the Ganges to which I would invite all the persons whom I shall judge as likely to be of some help and I shall embark them with me. A secret letter which I would leave in the hands of the person who would command in my absence, would instruct him to get ready to proceed to Chittagong with all the Frenchmen at the first news he would receive about the arrival of our ships at this place and carry away with him all the money, which instructions he could execute easily by following the route to Dacca. The colony of Chadernagore would remain by this means abandoned, but it is an inevitable evil and against which there is no remedy. Besides, what shall we lose? And moreover, what risk do we run? At the most, women would be made prisoners, but it is certain that the English will not dare do any damage to the houses and to the colony, when they will know that we have arrived in force in their proximity. Moreover, the prisoners we shall make at Chittagong will furnish us wherewithal to make the exchange.

This operation, carried out with secrecy in the manner I have just stated and with all the precautions I have indicated, assures a certain success, but once more it must be entrusted only to persons who, having a deep knowledge of the locality, are in a position to execute the whole from point to point, without which the best combinations would become useless and the attempt will fail.

Whilst in India we would act as I have just stated, the Ministry in France, which by its orders, will be in a position to combine exactly the time when all this operation will be executed, could then dispatch a squadron with forces of which one-third would be meant to reinforce the garrison of Mauritius and put this Isle beyond any attack, one-third to augment the garrison of Pondicherry and the other third would recruit the army which would be in Bengal. Whilst the latter would push on with the war there vigorously, there is very little to fear that Pondicherry would be attacked, expecially when we shall have Haider Naik and the other princes as our allies.

Here are, I think, the two surest plans to follow to succeed in the attack of India and I have no doubt at all that they will have all the success expected of them, if they are properly executed and especially

with all the promptness and secrecy which the operation requires, for, to execute the operation properly we must arrive here like lightening, that nothing transpires and begin to strike the blows capable of stunning the enemy, without giving it the time to get its bearings. To assure the success, it would be good to fall on him in the midst of peace; it has given us an example in the last war. Is the right of reprisals not permitted? The English are keeping all their troops in the north of Bengal at Patna, and Calcutta, which is entirely stripped, is not at all safe from a sudden attack. It could be attempted and if the circumstances at this moment were the same as they are today, it is certain that it would be carried by surprise.

Moreover, I ought not to forget to observe that the plan I give here is drawn and reasoned upon actual conjunctures, but if fresh circumstances should supervene, then changes would have to be made. For example, if the English fortified Chittagong and if they placed there a strong garrison, it is certain that there would be more difficulties to surmount than there are today, since this place is without forces, without fortifications and exposed to become a prey of the first comer who will attack it. Moreover, I do not imagine that they would think so soon of putting it in safety. Their fortress of Calcutta demands their first cares and is not likely to be completed before two years by working promptly and without intermission.

(Signed) CHEVALIER.

C^2 120, f. 03-32

Chandernagore, 6th January 1771

To

My Lord Terray, Minister of State,

Department for the Navy.

My Lord,

I have the honour to place before you a faithful account of all the interesting events, political as well as administrative, that took place in India since the departure of the ships Le Triton and L'Hector. I also intend to go into certain details in this letter.

In the last one which I wrote to you on the 28th of the last month, of which I attach herewith the duplicate, I informed you, my Lord, about

the very deep anxieties I passed through because of the war with which we were threatened and which appeared inevitable because of the differences that had arisen between the Courts of Spain and England. The English successively got definite information from their Court about the state of affairs in Europe, as well as about the events they would have to contend with, and at the same time, they received instructions about the line of conduct to be followed under all the circumstances and the precautions to be taken to be on their guard. During all the time the doubts about the possibility of war lasted, there hardly passed two months when they did not receive either letters or mails from London by land or by sea. We alone, my Lord, were left without any news, and it was only through the English themselves and that too after distributing money that I secured information about the news they had received. Their great preparations increased my fears still further. Day and night 20,000 workmen were employed to improve the fortifications of Calcutta, troops were marching from all parts of Bengal to meet at a common spot so as to be able to provide assistance in case of need. Finally, the measures I saw them taking quite clearly pointed out to me the danger to which I was going to be exposed and which, in my situation, I could only fear for my own person. On the other hand, the silence continuously observed in France prevented me from taking a decision on any definite course of action. I was equally afraid of taking any action as well as of remaining inactive. On the eve of the declaration of war I saw my fate decided, i.e. to become a prisoner in the hands of the English. To avoid that it was necessary to make my escape in advance, and if the war did not take place, as it happened in this case, my flight would have occasioned a shameful retreat which would have given the whole public a cause for laughter at my cost. This thought, more than any other, restrained me, but there were many occasions when I could not resist the temptation to proceed into the interior of the country and wait for the event at the court of the Princes who are most attached to us.

A situation, as cruel as the one in which I was placed during all this time, ought to impress, my Lord, how important it is that we should receive news, even in advance of the English, about events concerning this nation likely to happen in Europe, may be, only to save us from falling into the hands of the enemy and give us time to save the papers and the most precious property of the nation. The plan I have proposed

to M. le Duc de Praslin would spare us all fear in this respect and would not cost much for its execution. It would be to dispatch every three months from the ports of France a fast-sailing boat which, heading straight for India, would easily reach the destination in three and a half months, and thus, once this service is established, we would be in a position to receive every three months news from France to India, as well as that from India to France. Another advantage would result from this move that these small dispatches once they become a rule, the English would slowly stop taking umbrage which every new step on our part necessarily gives them on our account, extremely vigilant as they are about our slightest movements. As for the expenses, which these small boats would entail, not only would these be of little consequence, but it would also be easy to cover them from the profits that could be derived from some goods and provisions with which they could be loaded, whilst coming to India as well as on their return trip to Europe.

From the moment these rumours of war began to spread, I immediately dispatched to Pondicherry all our best pilots. These are too precious men for the nation to be allowed to become victims of arrest, in case of a rupture, for, without them any enterprise on Bengal from the sea would almost become impracticable, or at least very difficult. Therefore to protect them against any eventuality, I intend to send them to the Coast (Coromandel) every year towards the month of March which is the season of the year when they are least useful in the Ganges. They will remain there till the arrival of the vessels from Europe, and in accordance with the news received from home, M. Law could send them back on ships destined for Bengal. I fervently hope, my Lord, that you will approve of this precaution which may become so important in certain cases, and which appears necessary today, especially in view of the precarious condition in which we are here, and also in view of the unexpected events which may occur in Europe from day to day. Besides there will be no extra expenses, since it is immaterial whether the pilots are paid here or on the coast. There is only an additional subsistence which it is customary to give them in such cases, but which is such a trifle that it ought neither to stop the move nor could it be compared with the advantage that would result from it.

The general political situation in India threatens to completely change its aspect. New and entirely different interests will shortly replace those

which continued to exist so far among the powers. I do not know how far the revolution that is preparing might influence the affairs of the English, but if I may venture my conjectures on this point, it appears that they will soon repent for the mistake, inconceivable as also incredible, which they have recently committed.

You are aware, my Lord, that they had kept the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam at Allahabad, a city situated in one of the districts under the dependency of Shuja-ud-daulah, where he lived in an obscure manner on a meagre pension which they allotted to him, and for which they amply recouped themselves through the advantage they derived by making use of his name and employing it to their benefit whenever they judged it necessary for the success of their intrigues and their policy. The Prince, without money, without resources and expelled so to say from his kingdom in which he had lost all his credit due to his weakness, had placed all his confidence in them, and on the promises which they had given him to re-establish him on the throne of his ancestors and to employ all their forces for that purpose, he had made them a gift of the three provinces of Bengal of which they are in possession, a kind of formality which, although illegal, they thought was necessary at that time to strengthen the force of their right of conquest. Since then, either the circumstances did not permit them to fulfil their promises, or they were afraid to get involved in a long and costly war which they would have to wage and the success of which appeared to them doubtful, because they would have had to fight with all the combined forces of Hindustan. Since that time, I repeat, they merely showed their willingness to keep their word, but took no action in that direction. During this interval, the Marathas, taking advantage of the troubles and the confusion which had resulted from the anarchy reigning in the Empire, appeared with several armies, vast in number, and seized Delhi, after defeating the Jats, the Ruhelas, and the Pathans who wanted to oppose their advance.

This nation, I am speaking of the Marathas, more intent on booty than anxious to preserve such vast conquests, found it more advantageous to return them to the legitimate sovereign, and make a merit of it, of course, after seizing all the riches that could fall in their hands. Consequently, they sent a proposal to the Emperor to place him once again in possession of his kingdom and to undertake that he ruled with all the splendour of his dignity and befitting authority, if he would join them.

In the situation in which he was, a more favourable opportunity could not offer itself and he did not hesitate to immediately follow the route which fortune seemed to open for him. But the difficulty was to obtain the consent of the English under whose domination he was. The latter, who realised the consequences of the move, opposed it and tried for a long time to dissuade him from following this course by prejudicing his mind against the Marathas and by representing to him that they were inviting him to their camp to kill him and thus dispose of the only competitor in their way. This weak and timid prince did not know what decision to take until the Marathas, annoyed with his hesitations, began to assume a threatening attitude and pointed out to him that if he did not accede to their request, they would elect another Emperor in his place and declare that he had forfeited all his rights to the Crown. Then, any further consultation was out of the question. The English themselves, out of policy as well as out of necessity, ceased to oppose any longer his departure, and thus, in last July [7], this Prince, set out for his capital. A large detachment of the Maratha army, commanded by one of their generals, came to receive him and took him under its protection after signing with him a treaty though very disadvantageous to him. The two most onerous articles stipulated that he should pay at the time of his entry into Delhi a crore of rupees [8] or 25 millions of our currency to the Maratha army, and that besides he should grant it in perpetuity the right of one-fourth of the revenues of all the empire. On these conditions, the entire Maratha nation undertook in its turn to bring back under the domination of the Emperor all the provinces which had strayed away from it, recall to their duty all the Princes and governors who had ceased to recognize his authority and force them to pay him all the revenues of which they had failed to give an account whilst the throne was vacant, as well as the arrears.

This treaty today gives much cause for anxiety to the English, who fear, reasonably, that it might sooner or later involve them in a very arduous and ruinous war. Their fears are all the more justified as a short time back they received an embassy on behalf of the Marathas who demand an account of all the revenues of Bengal. This matter is actually under negotiation, and it is not possible to anticipate its result. The English, naturally haughty and puffed up with the pride of their past successes, will not voluntarily yield. On the other hand, the Emperor,

because of his present indispensable position, as also because of his desire to take revenge for having been their puppet whilst he was in their hands, will not easily allow them to enjoy the tranquil possession of his richest provinces, but on the contrary, will make utmost efforts to recover them. The Marathas are bound to support him; apart from the fact that they have undertaken the responsibility to do so, their own interest is involved in seeing that Bengal returns under the domination of the Empire, since they have claims on one-fourth part of the revenues. Thus, sooner or later war appears inevitable. The English themselves expect it, so much so that they have already collected all their forces on the frontier of Patna in order to be ready for any eventuality. They are at the same time having recourse to intrigue and negotiation with all the princes who are in the same boat as themselves and from whom the Marathas also demand the account of their revenues in the name of the Emperor. They earnestly represent to them how it is in their interest to unite with each other for the common cause, and thereby try to form a coalition strong enough to balance the power of the Marathas. If they (the English) succeed in their attempt, it will be a very clever stroke, because they will by this means avoid, at least for the time being, a war on their frontiers, by giving occupation to the enemy who, before thinking of attacking them, will be obliged to commence by subjugating all the Princes and governors who refuse to submit. During this time, there might arise more favourable events by which they will profit and which, by a stroke of fortune which has continuously followed them even in their greatest blunders, will help to extricate them from the delicate situation in which they find themselves landed.

Whilst the English are thus employing all their resources, the Marathas, in their turn, do not appear to let the matter drag on. They are aware of the superiority of the Europeans to their own troops, and for this purpose, they would like to engage a certain number of them in their service to oppose the English. Consequently, Janoji, one of the principal Maratha chiefs with whom I have always had friendly relations, and whose possessions adjoin Bengal in the entire west moving up from south to north from Cuttack to the province of Berar, Janoji, I repeat, has written to me to sound my intentions and to know if I would furnish him a corps of 700 to 800 men with arms and artillery; he offers to defray all the expenses and maintain them at his expense whilst they remain in his service. This demand on his part is, moreover, supported by very

urgent requests from the other three chiefs who command all the forces camping in the vicinity of Delhi and numbering more than 200,000 cavalry. Today I am given to understand that the Emperor himself intends to write to me to persuade me to comply with this request and join the forces of the (French) nation to his by a treaty. He is apprised of the large number of troops which we have at the Isle of France and appears to rely on them.[9]

While recognizing, as I do, the vast advantages which it would be possible to gain from all these proposals, our situation and powerlessness did not permit me but to give very evasive replies with all sorts of assurances of goodwill. At the same time, as, in the midst of so many events that are preparing, it is important that I should have information about everything that is taking place in order to procure for the nation means to profit by the favourable opportunities which might present themselves, I deemed it proper to station at the courts of these Princes some intelligent person capable of looking after its interests. For this purpose I chose two persons whom, from among all those who are here, I considered most suitable to fulfil this objective. One of them is M. Visage, a surgeon by profession, and the other M. Dujarday, ex-employee of the Company at Pondicherry.

The first left about 8 months back for the camp of Janoji, and in order that his mission should remain secret, lest it might give umbrage to the English, he declared with my approval that he was leaving for Europe by land, and that, on the way, he intended to pass through Delhi and then travel through Persia. His passport was quite in conformity with this declaration and made a mention of it. At the same time, I entrusted him with letters for Janoji, Kasim Ali Khan, as well as for the four principal Maratha chiefs, and also gave him instructions as to the line of conduct he should follow. I little imagined that after so many precautions, he would meet with some obstacle on his way. But hardly had he arrived at Cuttack when one Mr. Wekes, English Resident at this place, wanted to arrest him and even sent several of his men to seize his person. But far from losing his head because of this reception, he extricated himself out of this situation as a man of resource. At the sight of these men sent by the Englishman, he put himself on the defensive at the head of those who formed his retinue. Next, seeing that his resolution would not deter his oppònents from attacking him forcibly, he at once charged them, and was lucky to force them to decamp after giving them

a severe drabbing with sticks. Thereupon he went straight to the Governor of Cuttack to lodge a complaint and obtain justice for the insult dealt him by the English chief in a territory in which he thought he had protection and safety, since it was under the government of a Maratha prince who was a friend of the French nation; he threatened that if he did not receive prompt satisfaction from him, he would bitterly complain to Janoji, his master. This man, frightened by this threatening language but won over at the same time by presents from the English chief, was in a very embarrassing position about the decision he should take. However, to avoid all reproach, he pretended to send to the English lodge his troops who merely attacked a few servants, and at the same time ordered that M. Visage be given lodgings in his fortress until he received instructions from Janoji on his account.

In my turn, I did not lose a single moment to lodge the strongest protest with the Council of Calcutta, and demand satisfaction for the affront dealt by his Resident to the nation in the person of M. Visage. It was in a great quandary, for this Resident had committed the act only at the instance of the Governor. However, they did not want to disclose this fact to us, and they promised us satisfaction, which we never got, since this same Wekes still continues to occupy the same post.

In the meantime, Janoji, who received news about this incident, was furious with his governor at Cuttack. He at once sent him an order to appear before him and give an explanation for his conduct. He also ordered him to furnish to M. Visage an escort and other things he may need to proceed to his camp. At the same time, he reproached him for all the troubles and damages he (M. Visage) might have had to suffer. Thus passed this incident. M. Visage ought to be now at Nagpur, place of Janoji's residence, and I am constantly waiting for news from him.

What right did the English have to arrest him forcibly as they wanted to do and as they would have invariably done, if his firm attitude had not protected him ? Is it not an open violation of the law of nations, and a glaring encroachment on the liberty of our nation ? What ! In the midst of peace, a Frenchman furnished with a passport, cannot travel freely, and go wherever he is dispatched without being subject to violence prompted solely by the most overt injustice? This is today the degree which English despotism has reached: it does not recognize any law other than that of arbitrary power supported by force which it is always ready

to use to subject everything to its caprices and whims. I have included this incident as an instance of our grievances in the new memorandum which I have just prepared and of which I attach herewith a copy. It will serve to emphasize, my Lord, the state of disgrace and humiliation in which we live, and how much we are crushed under the shameful yoke which oppresses us. I can produce conclusive proofs in support on all the matters; all taken from the English correspondence itself as well as from that of the small factories and other authentic documents. But as they form a huge mass of writing, time does not permit me to copy them out at the end of the memorandum so as to be included in the mails which will leave for Europe just now. You will therefore receive only the memorandum which is a simple recital of facts and the evidence to which I refer will follow on some other occasion and can be affixed to it.

I had prepared this report for M. Law in the hope that he would pay a visit to Bengal to discuss State matters with the English commissioner. It was Chevalier Lindsay, Captain of the ships of His Britannic Majesty who was appointed by his Court for this mission, but today it appears that the post will not be filled up since, after his replacement by Admiral Harland, he left for England in last October and I do not know exactly whether this Admiral has orders to pursue this matter in his place. M. Law has not sent me a word about it, and the Admiral, instead of coming to Bengal, went to spend the winter at Bombay with his squadron of four warships of 64 to 74 guns and two frigates.

Besides, even if this negotiation had been initiated, it is easy enough to foresee its result, and see that the Court of England had appointed a Commissioner for this purpose only to amuse us and show that it had paid some heed to our complaints. Nevertheless, it is certain that it would not have produced any result in our favour and that we would have all the same remained in the state of slavery and servitude under which we are groaning and will probably groan still longer. If it is true that the Court of London did really have the desire to do justice to our subjects of complaints and give us justice, it is in Europe that matters have to be negotiated and not here between two commissioners whose powers are never wide enough or who are always afraid of committing themselves either while acceding or refusing. The English commissioner in such a conjuncture has too many different interests to reconcile. If he listens to the voice of justice or of moderation, his own nation is ready to make him out a criminal for it, and further still this powerful body of the

Company will at once rise against him to defame him and hold him in suspicion, so that rather than exposing himself, although he will see the wrong, he will not dare to remedy it. These are the reflexions which struck me as soon as I came to know about the appointment of a commissioner and I think I have stated them in detail in my letters of the last year to M. le Duc de Praslin.

In any case, as it was necessary to put myself right in case this negotiation was initiated, besides the report referred to above, I had also drawn up a plan of the conditions and conventions which it was necessary to claim from the English plenipotentiary, not that I expected that he would ever consent to grant them but at least to enjoy the embarrassment of his replies and see how they would be evaded. Nevertheless they would have helped to throw better light on our state of suffering and persecution, as well as on the motives of the conduct of the English who would not have been able to conceal their feelings. Besides it would have driven them into corner and exposed them before all the nations in Europe as well as in India.

Herewith I attach, my Lord, a copy of these conditions and conventions which I had proposed to place before M. Law so that he should claim them from the English Commissioner during the conferences. Perhaps it might be of some use to you eventually in case there was a question of discussing the interests of the nation in this country between the two Courts. What is certain is that this plan can and should serve as a basis to all kinds of treaties which the authorities in France might propose to conclude between the English and ourselves concerning this part of the world. It does not contain a single item which we should neglect to obtain, as it is absolutely essential to the benefit of our commerce, to its facility and to its safety. Moreover, they are founded on justice, and the English by refusing them proclaim their ill-will and their perpetual desire to thwart us and destroy us forever. When I return to France, all my ambition would be to be sent to England to discuss these matters and bring them to happy end. So far as knowledge of India is concerned, I dare to flatter myself that I have enough of it to confront the English who themselves may possess as much and in this respect, they would not find it easy to make me their dupe. What a satisfaction it would be for me if I could obtain for my nation, through negotiations, the advantages which I have so much tried to secure for it but in vain, for I am grieved

at the futility of the great and countless troubles which I have continuously taken to this moment to fulfil an objective so glorious and so consistent with the zeal and sentiments of patriotism which will always animate me ?

M. Dujarday will shortly leave for Patna from where he will proceed to Delhi disguised as a Muslim and escorted by two competent and trustworthy guides I have given him. On the way, he will pay a visit to Kasim Ali Khan who is on his route. There he will obtain news about the state of affairs and repair to the camp of the Emperor and of the three Maratha chiefs to whom he will present his credentials which I have delivered to him. He will constantly keep me informed of their plans and their designs, apprise me of what we should expect from them, and I shall draw up my plans accordingly. I have established a safe channel so that our respective letters, written in ciphers, can reach safely without running the risk of interception. I am confident about all the precautions I have taken in this respect. As I learn something interesting from this quarter, I shall seize every opportunity, my Lord, to communicate it to you either by land or sea. If I utilize the latter channel, I shall make use of the cipher which I have sent to M. le Duc de Praslin and which can be found in his office. There are two Europeans in this country, one a German by nationality and the other a Frenchman. The former's name is Sombre, and the latter's Madec, formerly pilot's apprentice on the Company's ships. Sombre was formerly a sergeant in the garrison at Chandernagore. He left this job to join Kasim Ali Khan in whose army he became one of the generals in his war against the English. He followed his master in all his reverses and always served him faithfully. It was he who was charged with the massacre of 300 Englishmen who were prisoners at Patna and whom Kasim Ali Khan driven by despair ordered to be put to death. The English had such a grudge against him for having executed such a barbarous order that they swore vengeance on his head by setting a price on it. But he withdrew into the interior of the country where the Jats, having formed a very high opinion about his bravery, have today confided to him posts of vital importance. He governs a very large region, has a very big corps of army under his orders, commands extraordinary respect and has earned a great fortune. As he has also sworn an implacable hatred for the English, there is every reason to expect that he will eagerly seize every opportunity to cause them as much harm as they have wished to do him. Madec is also stationed in the territory of the Jats

and owes his promotion to this same Sombre. He commands a body of troops, has acquired a reputation and gained the confidence of several princes. I have written to both of them, and I am confident that they will render very valuable services to the nation at the proper moment. These two men have to be handled tactfully; they can facilitate for us important operations when the occasion arises. The unfortunate thing is that this kind of men are of low birth, and because they have received no education, they are devoid of broad views and this noble ambition which it is desirable to inspire in them, and that is what I am striving to do without reservation.

This is one of the occasions, my Lord, which ought to prove to you how the Committee, which has just been set up to administer the political affairs, instead of producing useful results which are no doubt expected of it, can, on the contrary, become harmful. How indeed in similar circumstances would it be possible for me to communicate to the members, who form it, all that I have written here ? Would there not be any risk of the secret being divulged ? And if it once happened to be divulged, would there be any chance to ensure success in any enterprise? I had the honour to place my observations on this subject before you in a letter which left by the ship le Vert Galant. Kindly allow me to refer to them. The heads of the administration in India alone ought to be entrusted especially with the handling of political affairs, if some success is to be expected of them. This is the only way to inspire confidence among the Princes and observe in all proceedings utmost secrecy which is the life and soul of every kind of transaction. In a Council, all matters which are discussed therein, become an hour later the subject of the general talk of the town. If an enquiry is made about the source of leakage, it is impossible to discover it: nobody talked and yet everything becomes public. It is an observation I have always made, not only amongst us but also among other nations. This experience, if it is once admitted, ought then to serve us as a guide in laying down the rule which we should adopt as a safe-guard. Therefore, I hope, my Lord, that you will be pleased to approve of my conduct in all the matters about which I have written to you. I have not communicated anything to anyone, and the negligible expenses, that have been incurred, are entered in the books apart, of which you alone will be informed.

I am engaged, my Lord, in drawing up special maps of the 24 provinces of Hindustan. This work, while supplying much more special knowledge than is available so far about this vast country, will at the same time give information about the routes and distances between the places. This is an important point from which we might derive great advantage and great facilities in the execution of our plans, if one day circumstances become favourable to us. Moreover, I do not claim anything like perfect accuracy for these maps. I am even very far from considering them as such, for they have been drawn only from terriers of the (Mughal) Empire and from the registers of archives in which the latitude, almost completely unknown to the people of this country, is neither noted nor observed, with the exception, however, of the coasts for which I followed M. D'Aprés. As this work is very long and requires continuous information, it cannot be ready before the next year.

Recently I received a very pressing letter from Kasim Ali Khan, in which he has, a little testily, expressed his surprise to me at our inaction when the present fortunate circumstances ought to make us more active. He adds that he is aware of the number of troops which we have received, and that this fact adds to his surprise because we are keeping them idle. He is always prepared, he asserts, to faithfully carry out the terms of the conditional treaty on which he has agreed with me and of which I have forwarded a copy to M. le Duc de Praslin. He accepts all the changes, also conditional, which I had made in his proposals and which I had judged vitally necessary for the interests and advantage of the nation.

He appears to be intimately connected with the three leading Maratha chiefs who have recently placed the Emperor once again on the throne, namely, Tokkadgy-olkar[10], mahd-djy-senddia[11], and ranchonder-goness[12]. He has been associated with them for a long time and won over their protection. They presented him to the Emperor who received him with much kindness, expressed to him his great sympathy for his past misfortunes and promised to improve his lot at the earliest opportunity. The Marathas likewise have promised to take him to Bengal with them, and restore him to his former position. He (Kasim Ali) even assures me that one of these chiefs was preparing to descend into this province and commit incursions therein at the head of 50,000 cavalry. But he has no hope of success in this enterprise unless we are in a position to support it, in view of the known superiority of the Europeans over the

Indian troops. If this event takes place, as there is every reason to expect it, it would be a very favourable occasion for us. But our impotency does not permit us to turn it to account, and we shall regretfully see it vanish as we have already seen many others. However, it is not money which would lack. This Prince, from his own treasures[13] and because he has as powerful a support as he appears to have, would be in a position to furnish us all the money we would need. But to attempt something, the Governor of the Isle of France must have, which is not the case, orders in advance to dispatch the number of troops that would be demanded from him from India and at the first requisition addressed to him, he must, moreover, have made preparations for it, and for this purpose, he must have the necessary number of transport-ships as well as warships, particularly to-day because the English have four of them with two frigates.

On the other hand, Pondicherry is still not at all ready for all these events. It is a place still open on all sides, and which will not for a long time be safe from a surprise attack, especially so long as the Council will continue to be in dearth of the necessary funds to pay for the labourers and hasten the fortifications. It is true that, in a pressing situation, it would be possible to meet this deficiency by placing therein a sufficiently large garrison to impose on the English of Madras so as to prevent them from attacking it. In a way, I would prefer this expedient to fortifications without soldiers, for the reason that Madras, in consideration of the large number of forces at Pondicherry, would not dare to withdraw the garrison to send succour to Bengal, which would create a very advantageous diversion. But once again, for that purpose, we must have warships, at least a number sufficient to oppose those of the English.

Shuja-ud-daulah has received a summons from the Emperor to pay him all the arrears of revenues which he has enjoyed for several years without submitting an account. It is even said that this summons has been sent to him in collusion with himself, as a means calculated to facilitate the execution of his plans to favour his master in whose fortune he is today more interested than anyone else in his capacity as the Grand Vazir, and also try to shake off the yoke of the English [14]. For this reason, there is no doubt that he will do his utmost to remit to the Court of Delhi as much money as he can, if he finds that that can help him to carry out his plans. But on the other hand, it is certain that the English

will keep a close watch over him and not permit him to act in a manner contrary to their real interests. However, they will find it difficult to oppose his action to a certain extent, and if the Maratha army descends, they will be forced to treat him more tactfully. Really speaking, he cannot tolerate them and detests them from the bottom of his heart. Thus, he has been waiting for a long time for a favourable occasion to give vent to his feelings.

The Council of Madras is preparing a ship with a view to establishing a factory at Balambonan (Balabak) Islands, where there is an excellent port. Mr. Dalrymple proposed this plan which has been approved by the English Company. These Islands are situated 25 to 30 kilometres from the northernmost point of Borneo, all the trade of which they plan to attract slowly in this new establishment. I had proposed a similar plan long back, but the authorities in France having failed to pay to it all the attention it deserved, we witness today a rival and a more active nation than ours execute it and snatch it from us. This proximity of the English will annoy the Dutch who, rightly, would not like to see this nation slowly encroach on their spice trade. As a matter of fact, the odds are that it is one of the most important objects in the plan of the English in setting up this establishment, and they are known to be sufficiently enterprising not to let the occasion for it to escape if it presents itself, and even create it. Apart from this advantage, they will derive from it many others which alone are more than sufficient to compensate them for the initial expenses of this enterprise. The mere trade of Borneo offers them very lucrative branches and will bring them huge profits. The Dutch know all its value, for, in spite of the tragic events that have frequently befallen them at Bandjermasin, where they have had several times all their garrison and their employs assassinated by the natives, they have never thought of abandoning it, because of the huge profits they are making there. This place, situated at the southern extremity of the mainland of Borneo, furnishes them a surprising quantity of pepper, at the price of Rs. 8 per 100 lbs. in barter for other goods and especially for opium on which they make a profit of more than 200 per cent. Henceforth, they are going to be anyhow in competition with the English who, masters of Bengal and consequently of opium, will not fail to seize entirely all this product to deprive the Dutch of the same, and thus control all the new trade which they are now on the way to start. I do not know how the Dutch Company

will take it, of course, by getting furious, but by tolerating what it cannot probably prevent, unless by entering into an argument which can only terminate in a war, in which might alone will be right. The character of the Dutch and their jealousy for trade is too well known not to anticipate that the administration of Batavia will strain every nerve to thwart the English in their new project. They will even not spare anything to incite all the people of Borneo against them and succeed in getting them assassinated: barbarous means which they have never hesitated to employ and in which they have succeeded so many times. But the English are prepared for it and are consequently taking their precautions, since they are dispatching forces which can protect the employees entrusted with laying the foundations of this establishment. They would have probably found the place occupied by us, if M. de Marchir, whom I had sent on this mission more than two years ago with the ship L'Epreuve, had not allowed himself to be surprised by the Islanders of Borneo, who, having gone on board at night slaughtered the whole staff and crew so that not a single one escaped from the massacre with the exception of the gunner who was in chains and whom they spared. Such is, in short, the detail which I have received of this tragic enterprise from the ships which recently arrived from Batavia. The Dutch, to make it more touching and avert the suspicion which the public lays against them, say that a similar accident befell, at the same time, one of their shallops. But with all that, the proper accounts which they (ships from Batavia) have brought us, lead one sufficiently to believe that it is they who are the hidden perpetrators of this abominable crime. However, as there are no proofs and as it is even impossible to obtain them, there is no alternative but to remain in doubt and uncertainty on this accusation, of which the greatest presumption rests on the fact that they are considered quite capable of it, according to several similar acts which can be cited against them. Whatever it might be, I have lost my ship and its cargo, which constitutes for me a loss of more than 5,00,000 francs and which I had luckily taken the precaution to insure in England. That would not discourage me from recommencing today this enterprise if I had the means to have the new ship which I would dispatch there escorted by 200 or 300 soldiers or sipahees. But the weak condition of our garrison at Pondicherry does not permit it, and moreover, M. Law must be authorized to sanction it. Thus, from this affair, the only satisfaction that is left to me is to have tried to

work for the welfare of my nation and the growth of its trade, but it is tinged with the grief of seeing this enterprise fail because of an accident so fatal for all those who were on board the ship. Among the number, there were about twenty Europeans from different nations, the rest of the crew consisted of lascars or Indian sailors.

If the English succeed in setting up an establishment there, they will thereby acquire the most advantageous situation in times of war to intercept our ships returning from China, which, henceforward, can no longer pass without meeting them between Borneo and Paragoa (Paracel Islands), a route which was quite frequently followed as the safest to avoid the cruising fleet at the entrance of the Strait of Malacca. The passage between Borneo and Paragoa will become impracticable, for, the English establishment will be just situated at its entrance. It is very painful for us, my Lord, to see this nation extend in this manner and continuously expand, whilst we remain idle and do not make the least effort to limit or at least slow down its progress. Its activity ought to augment ours; instead, we remain silent spectators of its aggrandisement and we fail to notice that every additional degree of power which it acquires is a step towards our suppression and ruin.

Since our re-establishment in India (in 1765), if we had followed the right principles and had availed of all the plans, we would have long ago, if not regained superiority, at least restored things to a sort of equality. For that purpose, we did not need to spend huge sums. It was only a question of incurring initial expenses for the transport of troops to be dispatched to Pondicherry. From there, they would have been afterwards distributed among the different princes, who demand them, to be maintained at their courts and at their expense. Thus, we would have indeed set up against the English a chain of enemies all around Bengal and encircled them till a favourable occasion offered itself to unite at the same centre and next pounce all together on the common enemy. It had always been easy, and it is so today more than ever indeed, to maintain, without spending a single farthing, 1,000 men with Janoji about whom I have spoken above, as many with Kasim Ali Khan, and double and triple the number with the Emperor. All these princes clamour for it, and offer money to have them in their service and pay for their expenses. Thus, we would have had, on the one hand, several corps which together would form 4,000 to 5,000 men. These men would be all transported

and would be at our orders to set them marching at the first suitable opportunity. What a credit would it give to our nation if it could thus after all its past misfortunes, serve as a protector to all the princes who would earnestly seek our alliance ? We would gain by this means their alliance, win their friendship, get their protection, and besides, obtain a share in their riches. Picked officers, whom we would take care to place at the head of these different corps, would be engaged in the camps of the various princes, with whom they would be stationed, in recruiting sipahees and training them in our exercises and manoeuvres. These sipahees would be raised from the very troops of the princes and paid by us but with their money. It would be easy to assemble a corps of these sipahees, far greater in number than the one which the English maintain and which constitutes all their strength. If things were thus prepared, I ask, what means would they have to escape from our hands eventually when, at the earliest moment of rupture, they would thus find themselves assailed from all sides in the interior of the country, whilst simultaneously, the squadron, prepared at the Isle of France, would arrive and likewise attack them from down below, that is to say from the river ? All these things, my Lord, appear difficult and perhaps even impossible in France, for want of local knowledge and information about the means and facilities we disposed of for the execution, whereas, in reality, there is nothing simpler, easier and more safe. I hope the authorities would have sufficient confidence in me to take my word for it and leave me master of such operations. I would answer in advance for the success and they would soon be convinced how much I am founded upon reason and conviction. There is indeed no difficulty in dispatching these troops, about which I have just spoken, to the camps of the different princes who demand them, and there is no reason to fear any obstacle for them in their route. The only question is to know the route that has to be taken. I know it and vouch for it that it is prepared. The sovereigns, through whose territory they must pass, far from opposing them, will gladly open the way for us and will furnish us the necessary provisions, out of cordiality as well as out of interest. I dare not dilate on this last point. It is a matter of such consequence that it cannot be put on paper with discretion. I wish, my Lord, I were in a position to have a talk with you on this matter; all the doubts, that could be raised, would then be instantly removed. The plan in question is so sure and so simple that it is not likely to raise the slightest objection. My arrival in France next year will enable me to

explain to you the whole matter, and if, after that, the decision is taken to work upon it, the success is assured.

Since the Company's trade is suspended, the English certainly have no more occasion to thwart it and place obstacles in it, as they have done in the past. But as if they were enraged, because they were deprived of this means to practise their ill-will and their envious tyranny on us, they today turn their attention to other spheres, the only ones that are still left to them, for interference.

By a strange innovation, they intend to force us, to take our litigations before the tribunals for employees which they hold scattered in different provinces and in which they exercise all the authority of the ancient Roman proctors, charged as they are with the collection of revenues. It is on this ground that they prevent us today from pursuing the debtors of the Company in their marts and their factories. We had believed that, on principle, their conduct was only a misuse of authority on their part, for which we would easily obtain reparation from the Calcutta Council by making our representations to it. But on the contrary, it supports them and authorizes them in a more positive manner in a letter which we have received from it in reply to our complaints. It tells us therein that in all the civilized states of the world, it has never been admitted that the creditors had the right to obtain justice by themselves and without having recourse to the laws of the Government, and that consequently, it thought it its duty, apparently as masters of the territory, to give full protection to all those who approached them with their complaints against our ill-treatment, just as, they add, really speaking and undoubtedly to tone down their statement, they are also ready to give us complete satisfaction when our complaints are well-founded. It follows from it that they are trying to deprive us of the most valuable privilege which the Companies enjoyed, and the only one which constitutes the safety of their trade.

The firmans of the Emperor and the paravanas we have had successively from the Nawabs of Bengal, which exist in our records, expressly state that in matters concerning the creditors of the Companies, the different governors and chiefs of the country will not at all interfere in them, except to oblige the debtors to pay and that in any case, they will not be accorded protection. Can there be a more clear and more precise statement ? We quoted before the English Council this passage, from which we inherit

our right, but as is it's wont, it circumvents by falling back upon general principles and finally refuses to pay any heed to our forcible arguments. The result is that, on all sides, we meet with obstacles which lead us to despair of any chances of success in recovering the sums due to the Company. If we arrest a debtor in a certain place, immediately the English Resident detaches to his succour sipahees who snatch him away from the hands of our men, using force and violence. Some have even been carried away from our lodges in which they were detained and confined.

What is henceforth the future of our liberty and of the safety of trade? By what right do the English claim to deprive us of them? I acknowledge in them none other than that of despotism and that of 'might is right.' They are masters of the territory. Agreed! But can they enjoy this sway with respect to other nations on any other footing than that enjoyed by the Nawabs from whom they have usurped it? Since the latter had granted and preserved at all times the rights and prerogatives which we claim today, the English cannot then deprive us of the same without committing most outrageous injustice. It's an act of violence contrary to the liberty of nations, and which most blatantly infringes the articles of the last treaty of peace concerning our establishments in India. But once again all these arguments fade before persons who refuse to listen to them and recognize as law only force which they possess, and before which they require everyone to prostrate himself. That is certainly a position which they can never force me to accept, firmly determined as I am neither to yield the privileges and the prerogatives of my nation, nor to allow it to lose any as long as I can defend them. If consequently, the Company does not receive the payment due to it, it will be a result of the injustice against which it has only to lodge an appeal in Europe in order to obtain a just reparation. I do not think, my Lord, that my firmness is to blame in this case. On the contrary, I follow the maxim that the office I occupy has been entrusted to me only to preserve our rights with dignity and resolution and reject anything that can tend to deprive us of them or abolish them.

Recently, we had to face once again the most humiliating situation at Chandela, a plot of land which we had acquired more than four years ago to transfer there our lodge at Jugdia, which is threatened with submersion at any moment by the waters of the sea. When we began to

clear it and put it in a condition so as to build a few huts on it, the English, jealous of the advantage which we would derive from the situation of this spot, thought of seizing it from us. They could not act publicly in their name, but they put forth that of the Nawab who, to obey the precise orders given to him, was obliged to send his sipahees who drove away our men, broke the huts which were begun and tore our flag. We at once lodged our bitterest complaints to him as well as to the Calcutta Council, but in vain. The latter had promised us justice and to have our ground restored to us.

From all sides our ships are stopped at Chowkies or customs of which the number has been infinitely multiplied. Each one of them commits horrible extortions on the score of duties which were never customary, and our Dastaks or passports have fallen into such degradation that we prefer not to make use of them and carry on trade on the lines of the Bengalees or the Armenians. Moreover, my narration does not disclose any new facts, they are only repeated. We are reduced to most humiliating servitude, and it will go on increasing with impunity. The people look upon with astonishment at the harrassmènt which the English continuously give us, and yet they (the English) have not so far been made to suffer any consequences for that. They (the people) expected that the incident of the trenches would make much noise and create lot of stir, but it passed over in silence like the rest. That does us infinite harm, and considerably increases the prestige of the English at the expense of ours. Never did we feel a greater need than today for a revolution but is there any means to operate it so long as we shall not make, any preparations for the event, more than what we have done up to the present moment.

The Maratha nation, as the most powerful and most warlike and the one also which offers the largest resources because of the prodigious number of its cavalry, deserves that we should seek its alliance in preference to any other, and be attached to it. It is already well-disposed to us, for, of its own accord, it has started making the first moves to approach us, but in whatever treaty we might conclude with it, its primary demand will always be that we should furnish it European troops. What reply shall we give it ? And what agreement, moreover, can we enter into with it in our miserable and shameful situation ? There is no question of

giving it empty promises and make light of them afterwards. We would thereby precisely not only disgrace ourselves, but also rightly forfeit all confidence, and consequently aggravate our situation still further. Nice things to work upon indeed ! If we were prepared for the eventuality in advance, or if orders had been given so that M. Law could dispose of, according to circumstances, a part of the troops which are stationed at the Isle of France, there would commence with their help a war, in which we would not appear as a party and which would not occasion any expenses, because they would be paid by the princes to whom we would lend our troops. They would use them afterwards to execute in their name the plans which we would ourselves dictate to them. What would the English have to complain about it ? It is their own policy which we would turn against them. Are we forbidden from forming alliances with the sovereigns of Hindustan and entering into covenants which suit both the contracting parties ? Where is the law indeed which stands in our way in undertaking to furnish by a treaty a corps of two to three thousand soldiers to the Emperor to be employed in his service ? Would the English be justified in complaining, if by a similar manoeuvre, he succeeded in bringing back under his domination a most opulent province of his kingdom, and which they snatched away from him, really speaking, only by force and usurpation ? They may very well say that it is the fruit of their success in the war which they waged against the Nawab. But what was this Nawab ? Nothing more than a simple governor and a subject of the Prince who had entrusted to him this place. It is therefore not his property they have seized but indeed that of the sovereign who had never offended them and who had even never been at war with them. Have they a right to retain it after robbing him of it ? And could he be blamed for trying to recover it by any kind of means ? Definitely not; and I do not think that any impartial nation can adjudge differently, according to the laws of equity. This therefore being granted, it follows that this Prince has the legitimate right to recover his own property, that he is equally entitled to assemble the forces needed to assure him of success and that as he needs European troops for this purpose, can an exception be taken if he approaches us to obtain them for him ? Similarly, we are indeed free to lend him the number we think fit, in virtue of the treaty which we would conclude with him and which would bind us to this engagement. This is the best as well as the surest means to humble the power of the English and reduce it to a footing which, by at

least restoring equality, would strip them for ever of this superiority which they have over us and which they have so long used in such an insolent manner. There is no need to fear that they would oppose the march of our troops and that they would attack them on the route. I doubt whether they would dare it, as there is no war declared in Europe. But even if they had the will to do so, they cannot execute it, because they (the troops) would be landed in a spot from where they would be conducted in a month's time to Delhi by a road which would keep them away by more than 800 kilometres from the principal English possessions and beyond all attack on their part. Besides, while following this project, as we would have beforehand won over the Marathas to our side and as they would know that these troops are destined for the Emperor, they would of their own accord, furnish them an escort till they reach their destination. Of all the plans that may be proposed, this one, my Lord, is the surest and the easiest, if it is decided one day to operate a revolution. When I meet you, I shall whole-heartedly offer myself to lead the enterprise and make a success of it, if I am considered fit for it. In my opinion, it cannot rightly have any influence on the affairs of Europe. This question is of a peculiar and isolated nature: it is the sovereign of the country who takes our troops in his pay by a treaty, judges it proper to use them to recover his dominions of which he has been unjustly robbed. The English cannot justly make a pretext of it to attack us in Europe. All that they can do is to send succour for the defence of their possessions. It is true that it would be impossible for them to send sufficiently large forces to resist us, for, if once we had a corps of 3,000 men with the Emperor, we would soon join to it another of more than fifty to sixty thousand sipahees who would be trained in European warfare, without taking into consideration all the cavalry which would follow us in such numbers as we would desire it. This enterprise is simple and easy, and if conducted with intelligence and the required local knowledge, it is bound to succeed. If I were in a position, my Lord, to explain to you its details, you would entertain neither any doubt nor any uncertainty, and if it could be put into execution, I would be immensely happy, since I would at last achieve this goal which I have been desiring since long, and which is to contribute my might to deliver my nation from this abyss of disgrace and humiliation in which it has sunk here and restore to it this degree of lustre and power from which I see, with so much grief, it has fallen for many years.

The event that has just taken place at Tanjaour justifies only too plainly, my Lord, the fears which I had expressed to you in one of my last letters. For some days past, the English have spread the report that their army has forced the Raja to capitulate. He has undertaken to pay 40 lakhs of rupees or 10 million francs to the English Company for the expenses of this war and ten lakhs to the officers and soldiers of the army as a reward for their troubles and labours. There are in this capitulation several special articles of which I have not yet received the details, but of which M. Law, who is in a better position than myself to get information on this point, will surely not fail to give you an account. Thus, there is one more prince placed under their fetters. This event took place under our very eyes and in our proximity, and we have put up with it in spite of the damage which results from it to our interests, and of which we shall soon feel the effects. He (the Raja of Tanjaour) was the only one who up to now had preserved his independence; today he is vanquished like the others. The English have not a single competitor on the whole coast, and now they are absolute masters from Cape Comorin to Benares, a stretch of 3,000 to 3,500 kilometres, from which they collect all the revenues and trade. Till what time shall we remain in this slumber which keeps us inert in the midst of so many great events which, in their trail, inevitably bring about our ruin and destruction? If, as a result of false notions, the authorities in France consider India as not so worthy of their attention and of their efforts, why not renounce it rather than stay in it with all this disgrace? But if, on the contrary, its utility and advantages are recognized, as they ought to be, then why allow a rival nation to seize it quietly and enjoy all its treasures, to be afterwards transported and poured into the Metropolis, and thus eventually acquire a degree of power which is slowly becoming so formidable so as to upset the very balance of power in Europe. If it were an invincible and impregnable monster in this country, there would be some reason to fear attacking it, but its strength is only a chimera and which the slightest circumstance can throw down. I supply the means for it; they are sure and certain; they involve little expense, or rather they do not involve any expense. What is required is men, and we have got them at the Isle of France, from which place they have only to be transported wherever we want. Then why not avail of the fortunate circumstances which present themselves? Besides, by taking action as I propose it, it is our own safety which we are safeguarding, for, if we do not take precautions in advance,

our destruction is certain. As soon as war is declared, we shall be attacked without a warning and without any preparations on our part. Our ruin will be its inevitable consequence; thus we shall cede, for ever and disgracefully, the peaceful enjoyment of the richest country in the world to our rivals whereas even now we dispose of easy means to hold our own there and balance their power by the one which we can raise against it with so much ease. This is, my Lord, the important subject-matter which I wish to submit to your Ministry. It deserves all its attention, since it concerns in such a special manner the fate of the nation, its glory and finally, its existence and that of its trade in India.

We had recently to wage quite a strong dispute against the English, and we got out of it as always does the weakest against the strongest, when the latter is unjust and full of ill-will. The incident is as follows :

M. Chambon, the chief of the mart at Kirpy, having got one of the debtors of the Company arrested, the English chief ordered him to release him, and on his refusal, himself came at the head of a number of armed men to attack our lodge, broke open its doors, forcibly entered it and carried away its prey. When we received the news of this incident, we lodged our complaints to the Calcutta Council; the latter, having no alternative but to listen to them, showed us its willingness to give us satisfaction and suggested that on both sides commissioners be sent to examine this affair and discover the truth. The result was that the acts of violence committed against our lodge were proved in all respects. The English Council consequently promised us to recall its officer, which it did. But hardly was he kept at Calcutta for a month when he was sent back to resume his duties which he continues to perform as before in the same place. This is what these gentlemen call giving satisfaction and rendering justice. The circumstances of this whole affair are mentioned in great details in our correspondence of this year with the Calcutta Council, and the Council (of Chandernagore) forwarded a copy of it to the administration.

Herewith, my Lord, I have the honour to place before you the deliberations held by the Council on the question of retaining the employees whose services are indispensable because of the needs of the civil service, as well as on the number of sipahees whom it is impossible to dismiss in view of the protection of the colony. You will see therein all the motives

which induced us to take this decision. It is not in keeping with the orders which we have received. But as in this case we took into consideration only the needs of the (State) service, the dignity and the prestige of the nation, we venture to feel sure that you will kindly, my Lord, approve of our action.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your most humble and most obedient servant

CHEVALIER

C² 124, f. 262-279 v°

Project on India

Chandernagore, 25th August 1772

If the Ministry in France, justly indignant at the state of oppression and degradation to which the nation has been reduced in India for so many years, is bent on delivering it from this position, as there is no doubt about it, and entertains ideas of operating a revolution which can restore in the political affairs the balance which is lost, it has to pay, I venture to state it with conviction, a very serious attention to the contents of the project which I propose, and has to be prompt enough to avail of the means which will be indicated to unmistakably attain the goal. Later on, the opportunity would be lost and perhaps another would never offer itself with such happy circumstances.

The state of the Empire of Hindustan offers us the most favourable occasion to repair the past misfortunes, shake off the ignominious yoke of tyranny under which we are groaning, restore our credit and our reputation among the Asiatics, recover the privileges of our trade and of our existence, of which force and violence deprive us every day by most revolting blows of authority, and finally raise us to a degree of power of which liberty and independence would be the glorious fruits.

The means I intend to propose are simple and easy and promise a success which I declare as certain, provided the execution of the same is entrusted to competent persons who possess a thorough knowledge of the politics of the country and of the way to handle it and are in a position to turn the circumstances to account.

This project has this additional advantages that it does not impose any expenses on the government because they will be paid by the Indian powers who will participate in it. Nor does it involve any risk or any difficulties and cannot or even should not really compromise us with the English in Europe. On the other hand, it brings to our side all the forces of Hindustan who are devoted to us at a time when war might be declared among the nations (of Europe?), prepares for us in advance all the means to wage it vigorously and successfully from the very beginning and in the meantime, makes us arbiters of the country in the name of the sovereign himself of whom we would support the legal authority in the capacity of allies. The sequence will unfold these incontestable truths in a manner which will neither leave ground for any doubt nor for any justified objection.

Let us begin by drawing a rough outline of the actual situation of Hindustan, of the political feeling which today animates the powers and of the interest of the different princes. This knowledge, while giving a correct idea of the state of things, will serve at the same time as proofs of my arguments as well as help to direct operations by pointing out the true means to employ to conduct them successfully.

Since in July [7] 1771, by an inconceivable mistake of sound policy, the English allowed the Emperor, after holding him for a long time in their grasp, to escape from it and to succeed in ascending the throne of his ancestors again under the protection of the Marathas, the system of the government in India has assumed a new aspect; new interests have replaced old ones; the confusion resulting from anarchy which reigned in all the parts and which, by weakening the Empire, contributed to the strength of the English, has begun to disappear because of the presence of the Prince who has resumed the reins; and the sudden changes, which have resulted from it, necessarily herald early troubles which can be terminated only by some great revolution which would either restore

to the state its strength and its power or bring about its complete destruction. If he is left to himself, it is quite possible that the latter eventuality may occur, and as the English would not then fail to profit by the certain disorder and confusion which would result from it, to seize everything and acquire strength, it is important for our politics to prevent such an event and for this purpose turn to account the favourable occasion which the circumstances offer us.

The Emperor by his treaty with the Marathas, who have restored him to his throne, has ceded to them, either on the score of gratitude, or out of policy, or may be out of necessity, the fourth part of all the revenues of the Empire which are calculated at eight hundred millions per year. The latter, who are interested in enjoying this part, have, in their turn, pledged to support him with all their forces and to reduce to obedience again all the governors and princes who had become independent during the last anarchy. As soon as this accord was concluded, the first care of the Emperor was to send circular orders to all the subhedars and commanders of the provinces requiring them to recognize his authority, and submit to the Royal treasury an account of all the revenues which they had enjoyed and appropriated. This proposal was resented by the Pathan Chiefs who occupy the territory situated between Allahabad and Agra. They openly rejected it and were the first to raise the standard of revolt in the hope that they would be supported by the other princes and governors who were interested in the same cause. But the Emperor did not give them the time either to consult each other or to take measures. His army commanded by himself and joined by that of the Marathas, composed of 1,50,000 men, immediately marched against the very Ruhelas who were consecutively defeated in two battles in which Zabita Khan, their general, and the leading chiefs lost their life [14]. All their fortresses at once fell into the hands of the victors, and the plunder which was resorted to there produced huge sums. Then the vanquished had no other alternative but to implore the clemency of the Prince who granted them peace on condition to pay him the revenues of the previous years and eventually pay him an annual tribute of 25 millions.

The initial success of the Prince's arms began to establish his power by holding the governors in the vicinity in check. Several of them who were inclined to follow the wave of rebellion changed their plan after this event and individually came to terms. Nevertheless, all did not

submit and the most powerful among them have taken up arms and appear resolved not to part with their money unless they are compelled to do so by force of arms. Shuja-ud-daulah, out of dissatisfaction with the Marathas and still more in his own interests, is the secret chief of the party and is awaiting the issue at the head of a sufficiently large army. The Emperor, still not strong enough by himself, draws his main strength from that of the Marathas who threaten the territory of Shuja-ud-daulah. They spent the monsoon in camps near his frontiers in the province of Allahabad, and there is indication that they would attack him after the rains. If, as politics would require it, the English lend him their assistance, it is probable that the Marathas, in order to create a diversion, may come and ravage Bengal. That is indeed what the English fear and what makes them waver on the decision they should take. But how will they avoid it, if they participate in this quarrel? And on the other hand, how can they avoid participating in it in order to keep away from their door the war which would all the same be inevitably carried there, unless they allow the demolition of the barrier which covers them, that is to say, unless they allow the overthrow of Shuja-ud-daulah who, if he is abandoned by them, cannot but seek his safety in victory, especially since Ghazi-ud-din Khan, his mortal enemy, has recently been recalled from Jaipur to be appointed Vazir in his place.

The Emperor, in his turn, who finds himself beset with so many difficulties and fears that he may be stranded therein, would like to be in a position to surmount them. During his campaigns with M. Law and his long sojourn with the English, he has learnt to recognize the superiority of European troops over the indigenous troops and has had an occasion to test their valour. For this reason, he is bent on securing a large body of these troops and maintain them in his pay. He cannot obtain them from the English, and he will not demand it from them, because he clearly sees that their interests are opposed to his and that they are sure to become his sworn enemies as soon as he will try to put into execution his plan to reduce to submission Bengal and the other provinces which are in their possession. There is therefore the French nation alone which should be interested in supporting his designs. He knows that its politics ought to impel it to take this course. It is therefore to this nation that he will turn his eyes and consequently, he has already sounded me with a view to finding out if I could secure him 4,000 to 5,000 men; he offers to pay

in advance all the expenses which would be pointed out to him as necessary for the transport, and to maintain them afterwaıds at his expense as soon as they will reach his court. My reply was that I could not give any promise on my own responsibility on such a subject-matter, but that I would soon write about it to the Minister, that he would be favourable to him, that in the meantime, he should take steps to get the necessary sums of money ready and forward them either to M. Law at Pondicherry or to me here, amounting to 20 lakhs which I deemed necessary for such an operation, that they would remain in our safe custody on a receipt from us, and that, if the deal does not come off, they would be returned to him.

With such a corps combined with his own forces and those of the Marathas and with a large number of sipahees which it would be easy to arm and discipline on our model, it is certain that he would soon reduce to obedience every one who would dare resist him, including the English, and that he would thus succeed in asserting his authority on a still more solid footing than it ever was under any of his ancestors. This is therefore the moment for us to avail of such a splendid opportunity, by restoring to the Prince his authority and his dominions, to operate a revolution which is proved to be necessary, to re-establish equality between us and the English and recover all the privileges of our liberty which they have snatched away from us.

What a guarantee for the present and for the future for our existence and our stability, if we passed on to the Prince 4,000 to 5,000 men which he demands, to whom will be attached, as I have stated above, the sipahees in such numbers as would be deemed proper and which it would be advisable to raise to from 20,000 to 25,000. Besides the reputation and the credit which we shall begin to enjoy from the first moment, we shall possess without incurring any expense a formidable force maintained in India, which, if war is declared in Europe, would be quite ready to be transported to a place where the interests of the nation would demand it. And it is thus that we shall prepare ourselves in advance in a sure and useful manner for the revenge which we have to take, that we shall attain wonderful success which indeed heralds a period of greatness to which it would raise us one day, and that we would succeed in humbling at last this jealous and turbulant nation, which it is so very important for us to confine to just limits, for, so long as we shall permit it to dominate

as it does, it will be rivetting the shackles which we are bearing and abandoning to it alone all the riches of the country and its trade, while reserving for us only disgrace and ignominy, if we do not venture to contend with it for them and share them with it, inspite of the just and incontestable rights which we possess. We need not labour under a delusion. Our present situation and daily experience, which we have been getting since the re-establishment of the nation, clearly prove that every branch of trade becomes forbidden ground so long as it remains subject to the arbitrary power and despotism which enchain us. The goods produced in Bengal are entirely swallowed up by a cargo which leaves every year for England, and there remains for other nations only the trash for which they are made to pay very dearly and which they are forced to procure from English private persons. Therefore if we desire to restore equality in trade, we must start by re-establishing it in the degree of power. But this can be achieved only by a complete revolution. Let us therefore work for it, and to operate it in a sure manner, let us eagerly seize the unique occasion which fortune offers us today. In vain will the Court of France conclude most solemn treaties with that of London to settle the affairs in India, in vain will they be backed up by most sacred documents and signatures. Who will vouch for their execution? So far as I am concerned, I assert that the employees of the English Company will not pay any heed to them, however positive may be the orders given to them, and that they will continue to thwart us and crush us so long as they have the force in hand and we havn't got one to oppose to them. Whence I conclude that, if there is a plan to re-establish a Company, as it is reported, its failure is a foregone conclusion so long as things will continue to remain in the state in which they are, that is to say, so long as the English power will continue to be the arbiter in India.

After this digression, let us pursue our subject by enumerating all the advantages which naturally accrue.

Firstly, by maintaining at the Court of Delhi and at its expense an army as formidable as that to which I have referred above and composed as I have suggested, how will our enemies resist such forces, further reinforced by succours which would certainly be dispatched to Pondicherry with all expedition at the time of the declaration of war? The latter would attack Madras while the Delhi army would march against Bengal, and by this fortunate diversion, the two principal

English establishments, each forced to defend itself by its own forces and without the possibility of helping each other, would soon succumb under the efforts of our decided superiority, against which it would become impossible for them to resist. We would, besides, be in a position to hold Bombay in check and give it occupation through the Marathas who are its neighbours and who, in their capacity as protectors of the Emperor, would be our friends by our alliance with him. This nation is today the most formidable power in Hindustan and consequently the one with which it is most important for us to be solidly bound by friendship. I even consider them as a very essential party in the execution of the plan in question. Money has great influence over them, and it is only with its support that we can, it is true, think of keeping them attached to us. But in this connection, the treasures of India must indeed be partly used to satisfy their greed until the circumstances put us in a position to dispense with them.

Secondly, by means of this army, we shall secure our existence against all untoward events which might befall us in case of a declaration of war, for, if unfortunately the succours which would be dispatched from Europe for the defence of our establishments were intercepted by the enemy, and worse still, if as a result of such a misfortune, Pondicherry were lost, we would still have left with us large resources. Our forces, combined with those of the Emperor and of the other princes whom we would have drawn into our alliance, would place us in a position to soon retrieve our losses and in our turn, attack the enemy with advantage. We would not have to fear scarcity at all; on the contrary, abundance would reign in our camp, because we would obtain our provisions without any difficulty from the friendly country, and in case of a repulse, retreat would always become easy since the whole of Hindustan would be open to us. Thus, by adopting this project, we establish our own safety in a solid manner against any kind of reverse, and besides, we get therein the glory of becoming the allies and defenders of the legitimate sovereign against the English who can only be considered as veritable usurpers and who cannot be called by any other name in all the conquests which they enjoy today.

Thirdly, while waiting for such an event, that is to say, until there supervenes a declaration of war which prudence dictates us to foresee

and against which it teaches us to take precautions in advance, we would commence to enjoy for the present advantages as considerable as real by the degree of power and credit which we would acquire from the outset in the whole of Hindustan. The English themselves, when they see us at their gates on such a respectable footing, would be under apprehension which would make them more tractable, and they would take good care not to harass us in our establishments and interrupt the course of our trade and of our affairs as they have continued to do up till now by jeering at our weakness as much to satisfy their hatred and their mean jealousy as to degrade us and humiliate us in the eyes of all the peoples who are witnesses of all the ignominies which are inflicted on us and which we are obliged to suffer.

Fourthly, once our credit and our power is established at Delhi, it would then be time to think seriously of the re-establishment of a Company in India on a sound footing, and it would be possible to work for it all the more effectively as the English, who would see us on a formidable footing, would become more amenable to grant us terms for a just and a reasonable treaty which, while restoring equality between the two nations, would reinstate ours to the same level of theirs. Perhaps the result of it would be that rather than exposing themselves to a war so disadvantageous for them in such a circumstance and in which we would enter only as auxiliaries of the Prince in virtue of the treaty of alliance which we would have concluded with him, they would prefer to consent to renounce their possessions, and restore to us the right to keep a garrison and erect fortifications like them in Bengal. If they refused to do so at once, they would be coerced into it, and it is then i.e. after reducing them to equality with us that we might succeed in concluding this treaty which I have proposed, which is so desirable for commercial Companies, and by which we would agree never to wage war between the two nations on this side of the Cape.

This is to what would conduce sooner or later the execution of the project which I propose today as the only one capable of restoring to our nation the lustre, the splendour and the power which it cannot dispense with, if it wants to continue to exist in a country in which it is daily losing the privileges of its trade and its liberty, and consequently, its riches and its honour.

Against so many varied advantages which offer themselves on all sides and which are so evident, is it possible to point out any drawbacks, difficulties and risks? I confess that I am not perspicacious enough to notice any real ones, even if I admit the possibilities. Let us suppose them, however, and advance every argument likely to be brought up against the soundness, and I dare say it boldly, against the infallibility of this plan.

Persons not so well acquainted with the topography may fall back on the difficulties of safely transporting to Delhi the corps of troops in question, because the English who have a squadron in India are sure to oppose it as soon as they get wind of our design.

They will also allege that not much reliance can be put on the promises of the Prince and that there is little surety that he will furnish every month the necessary funds for an army as large as that of which I have suggested the composition.

Finally, it may be said that the execution of this plan would lead to a quarrel with the English, because they will consider it with too jealous an eye not to oppose it from the outset, and that, if they find their efforts to dissuade us from it unavailing, there is reason to fear that there might result from it a war which the circumstances perhaps do not permit us to sustain.

Let us try to refute these three objections which appear to me the strongest and even the only ones which could be raised with some plausible semblance, but which, in my opinion, rest on basis which is not at all sound.

Firstly, the transport of troops to Delhi does not admit of any difficulty. They could be assembled at the Isle of France, from where they must be dispatched, and in order that the secret should not be divulged in India, it will be indispensable, till the moment of departure, to lay an embargo on all the ships and not permit any to go out of the Isle under any pretext. Next, there are two places which should be chosen for the landing, of which one should be preferred to the other because it is much easier in that it is nearer the time-limit proposed and that it offers the finest possible route for the march of the troops as well as for the transport of artillery, and that it will be possible to find there all articles necessary for the subsistence of the troops and generally for all their

needs. The second presents much more difficulty, its route is neither so open, nor so convenient, nor so short. But nevertheless with some pains and perseverance, we shall succeed in surmounting all the obstacles. The monsoon and the season will decide on which of the two the choice will fall, and I vouch that there is no fear at all of being met by the English squadron or of being troubled by it in the landing.

I may please be permitted not to declare here the name of these two places in question [15] and about which I have the best information. I do not conceal the fact that I am resolved to keep it a secret because of the motive of making myself indispensable and because of the intense desire to be placed at the head of this expedition if it takes place, for I consider its success assured and it will procure me the occasion to fulfil at last the ambition I always have had to serve my nation in a striking manner, capable of retrieving it from all its past misfortunes in India. Such a laudable stand-point will not make me out a criminal in the eyes of an enlightened Minister for whom I am writing. I am ever sure that it will, on the contrary, be considered as righteousness in his eyes and procure me all his protection. Besides, I have a sufficiently good opinion of myself to be convinced that no one from among the nation is as capable as myself of bringing this enterprise to a happy end, and that perhaps any one else would fail in it. It is not at all an impulse of vanity which dictates to me this language; those closely acquainted with me know that, thank God, I am free of this defect, but on this occasion, I argue on the strength of my own understanding acquired by a special study I have made of the local situation and of the Indian politics, of the faculty I possess of understanding and speaking the languages, and finally, of the vast knowledge which is the result of my long experience and of my deep reflexions. I am myself so convinced of the soundness of my proposal that I venture to answer for its success and that if I fail therein, I am ready to shoulder all the responsibility and suffer punishment for it in a manner that would be judged proper. But at the same time, while offering my services with such good grace, it is fair that I should lay on it a condition that I shall be given the widest powers, and that the authority, which will be confided to me in the name of the King, will be unlimited and could neither be contradicted nor disputed by anyone whomsoever; that all the officers, land as well as naval, and other persons who will form part of the expedition, whatever their rank or birth, will

be entirely under my orders, and that, if any one amongst them dared to disobey them and strayed from them, I would be free, according to the exigency of the case, to send him back to France while submitting an account to the Minister of the reasons which would have impelled me to take such a step. For, it should indeed be remembered that in such an expedition, it is necessary to maintain a very rigid subordination and a very strict discipline, especially in a country so distant or among the people whose customs and manners are so different from ours. It is indispensable that we should conform to theirs in order not to offend them and win their friendship for us. Greed and licentiousness, which the French are accustomed to disguise under the garb of gallantry, are the two principal vices which must be banished. The first will cause us to be hated and despised by people who would consider us as famished men who have come only to satisfy our hunger with their gold or with their riches; the second will cause us to be looked upon with horror. We must know how to respect the antiquated ideas of nations and adapt ourselves to them. Jealousy among the Mahomedans is a passion carried to such extremes that we must take utmost precautions not to give them cause for it. We must therefore be very strict in keeping in check our young officers as well as our soldiers in this respect.

Let us pass on to the second objection which we ourselves have raised above. It is concerned with the mistrust in the promises of the Prince who calls us to his succour, and with little surety about his ability to provide for the maintenance and subsistence of our army.

But does this objection not refute itself if he pays in advance a sum of 20 lakhs [16] or 5 millions which I ask from him for the expenses of the transport of the troops up to Delhi? This large sum paid in advance becomes a guarantee for his promise; and then, once the troops arrive at his Court in such numbers, he must indeed fulfil the engagements which he will have contracted with the nation by a solemn treaty which we shall have taken care to conclude with him beforehand. If he failed therein, he will bring about his own ruin and his own enemies would profit by such a capital mistake to detach us from his party, win us over to theirs and then crush him.

Thus, it now remains for me to answer the objection which refers to the fear that the execution of this project may lead to a quarrel with the English and involve us in a war in Europe.

But by what right could the English take exception to our action of concluding an alliance with the Emperor of Hindustan, whilst they themselves are doing so every day with all the princes? Is there any convention between them and us which forbids us from doing so? And is not France free like them to conclude treaties with any powers without discrimination with which it suits her to do so? By what right would they then claim to oppose it? I am not aware if they have any. It will thus constitute violence and injustice on their part, but we are not cut out to let ourselves be subdued by such means and France's honour will never permit her to thus see her liberty and independence enchained. In the whole of Europe, have not the respective powers among them treaties which oblige them to help each other and furnish auxiliary troops, and is war declared on them because they do not fulfil the conditions ? Then why is it that the same thing cannot be practised in India ?

We must, therefore, conclude that this project neither admits of any well-founded difficulty, nor of any risk, nor of any drawback; that on the contrary, it offers all the numerous advantages which I have enumerated; and that consequently, it ought to be adopted and followed without losing a moment, if we want to preserve India for the nation and restore to it its liberty, its independence, the activity of its trade and lastly, the enjoyment of its rights and prerogatives. Otherwise, there is no alternative, we must humbly yield to our rivals a country in which we are no longer permitted to breathe with honour, thus confess before the people our weakness, our powerlessness, and let graven in their memory the souvenir of the affronts and of the shameful bondage in which they see us every day live and groan. The lofty sentiments for my nation which animate me and which hold me in readiness to sacrifice for it the last drop of my blood, make me conceive too high hopes about the change, which I wish to see take place in her favour and to which I wish with all my heart to be able to contribute, to think for a single moment that should be the fate which awaits it. On the contrary, I am very happy to flatter myself that it will soon lift itself up from the bottom of the abyss, in which it finds itself hurled down, to ascend the pinnacle of greatness, display there its justice and its power, and thus win the affection and admiration of the people who witness today our condition and are surprised at it. Once again, the project is easy to accomplish, we have only to wish and

turn to account all our resources and the circumstances which fortune offers us.

Now I turn to the way in which we can proceed so far as the transport of the troops is concerned. The largest portion of it would be embarked on three warships, which it would be essential to employ for this expedition, and to which it would be advisable to yet add two frigates. They would take on their board all the artillery and as many munitions and provisions of war as it would be necessary. The quantity ought to be very large especially in arms, powder, bullets and cannon-balls for an army similar to the one which is to be formed at Delhi, all the more because it should be a provisioning for several years. The remaining troops which these ships of the King would not be able to take on their board would pass on private transport ships. In order to avoid commotion, we should dispatch successively, as it has already been practised, all these ships, King's as well as private, which will all assemble at the Isle of France, where it would be of the utmost importance for the sake of secrecy that they should proceed straight and without calling at any port, especially at the Cape where the Dutch have kept on informing the English ships, which pass there, about all our activities. They have even furnished them exact lists of all the French ships which have stopped in their harbour as well as of the number of troops they carried. I have in my possession one of these lists written in Dutch which was delivered to me by an English Captain. And finally, to avoid giving umbrage to the English in Europe, we would declare that this transport of troops at the Isle of France is meant for relieving those which are actually in garrison there, as it is done in the colonies.

Simultaneously with making preparations for this expedition in France, the Governor and the Chief Administrative Officer of the Isle of France would receive most definite, clearest and strictest orders to keep in readiness all the ships they would have at the Isle, belonging to the King as well as to the private individuals with a strict order not to allow any to leave under any pretext whatsoever, and to provision them with rice and other victuals for two months which would be the longest possible time to proceed to the place which will be chosen for landing, and finally, to furnish without delay to the expedition all that would be demanded from them and which it will be in their power to deliver.

In the meantime, I would receive in my turn by an express advice-boat, if, however, it is deemed proper to entrust to me the command of this operation just as I desire it, orders from the Minister to proceed to the Isle of France, and in order to avoid any suspicion about my departure, I shall spread the rumour that I have at last obtained leave which, as is known, I have been soliciting for several years and that I am availing of it to return to France. I shall see that I am accompanied by two or three ships from India which I shall take care to load with all sorts of provisions as also with the requisite amount of money which the Emperor will have sent me to meet the expenses. I would call at Pondicherry in order to plan the subsequent measures with M. Law, and finally, after arriving at the Isle of France, I would not lose a single moment to hasten, in concert with the Governor and the Chief Administrative Officer, the pace of the expedition. And in order that these two gentlemen should work for it with the same zeal as mine, it would be necessary that I were charged for them with most precise orders and powers to which they would have to submit, and which, out of respect, I would show them only in case I were forced to do so, either by their dilatoriness if I noticed that they resorted to it, or if I observed in them this kind of jealousy which unfortunately is such a common phenomenon among us on such an occasion.

I would also require similar orders for the Captains who would command the ships, and if any one amongst them refused to obey them, it would be necessary that I should have sufficient authority to remove them from their command and give it to others who would be more submissive and more inclined to work for the good of the nation. I am aware of all the difficulties which these individuals can always create when they see that they are commanded by a person other than from their corps. This reason therefore would indeed lead me to desire that only Captains and officers of the Company were employed in this expedition. The things would go on more smoothly with respect to me, and there would not be any ground to fear this discord and these dissentions which have almost always occasioned our ruin, and to which we owned that of Pondicherry in the last war. Finally, it is indispensable that he who would be appointed at the head of this important operation should be invested by the King with all the widest powers to compel obedience immediately and punish severely any one who would dare to create any difficulty in this respect.

One or two stern lessons timely given from the outset will settle everything and will recall every one to duty and to obedience.

All preparations being made at the Isle of France, all ships would leave in a squadron and proceed to the place of landing in India, of which the season and the monsoon would have decided the choiee. The crossing will never take more than six weeks if windbound, or one month if the winds were favourable. Having reached this place, the troops and their paraphernalia would be landed without losing a single moment, and they would at once set out for Delhi where they will easily arrive in one month if the landing is made at the more suitable of the two places,[17] and in a month and a half if the landing takes place at the more difficult one.[18]

The ships, which will have fulfilled their mission, will immediately return to the Isle of France. It will then be my job to deliver them safely, and I undertake the responsibility for it as well as for all the subsequent success which I have announced, and for which I repeat once again that I shall hold myself responsible to the State.

Among the number of troops that will be dispatched, it is especially essential to have an excellent corps of artillery and a company or two of labourers of every kind. In India particularly, it is the artillery which always decides battles and victory; and which would be very useful in a country as intersected by rivers as this one; it would be a diversion of which speaks Maréchal de Saxe. As it reaches very far, it would serve with advantage to bar the passage of these very rivers to the enemy, or to open it for themselves against him when they want to cross these themselves.

I must not omit here that to arm as it is advisable to do so, the corps of sipahees as well as that of the local cavalry about which I have made a mention, it is indispensable to send an extra 25,000 to 30,000 muskets and bayonets for the sipahees, as also a sufficient number of magazine rifles and pistols for the cavalry 10,000 strong. It will be equally necessary to send cloth for their clothing. The red colour ought to be preferred; others such as yellow, sea-green, etc., can be used for the facings. This observation is important in this country, where bright colours dazzle and disturb the people and intimidate them. Therefore, the English, who

have learnt it from experience, dress all their European troops and sipahees in red. I would also recommend that the soldiers be provided with broad hats with the copper sheet in front. These hats make the men look taller, and the glittering flash of the sheets in the sun seizes the Indians with confusion and fright. It's the same case with the drums, fifes and other instruments. We cannot have too much of these; the din and the pomp impose prodigiously on the Asiatics.

(Signed) CHEVALIER

$C^2$128, f. 261-261 v°

Translation of the agreement of Mahadji Shinde, General of the Maratha army at Delhi, with Monsieur Chevalier, received on January 29, 1773

1. In the event of a declaration of war between the French and the English, an army arrived in India on behalf of the King of France, and if any of the Chiefs of Hindustan opposes its passage, we shall consider him as our enemy. You must also simultaneously consider me as your ally and we must be united with each other like two brothers.

2. If the King of Hindustan does not wish to wage a war with the English and if the French are at war with them, and if they receive an army, we shall ally ourselves with each other to expel the English from Bengal with the combined forces, and from that time onwards if anyone declared himself as enemy of the one party, will become an enemy of both.

3. If the French army arrives at Cuttack or in Gujarat, I shall send men at all intervals to conduct it with care, but if the country through which it has to pass belongs to another chief, a passage will be obtained either willingly or by force, and I undertake to furnish you bullocks and victuals for which I shall not charge any money.

4. After expelling the English from Bengal, all that Madhavrao will be entitled to claim back legitimately will be restored to him.

5. We shall be allies of each other in all circumstances.

6. We shall await from each of our Masters the ratification of the present treaty, and when it will reach us signed by your King and mine and sealed with their seal, we shall consider it as properly consolidated, and we shall conform to it, and whoever will deviate from his promise and will not obey the orders of his prince will be guilty of breach of faith, and considered as an enemy.

I, the undersigned, interpreter for the nation in the Moorish and Persian languages, certify the present copy corresponding to the original in Persian, and its translation faithful and exact.

Chandernagore, February 10, 1773

M. Chevalier MAHY DE CORMERE.

C^2 128, f. 03-12 v°

Chandernagore, 28th February 1773

My Lord de Boynes,
Minister and Secretary of State,
Department for the Navy.

My Lord,

Since the letter I had the honour to write to you on 29th Septembeı, many important events have taken place and I think that I ought to inform you about them.

Janoji, Maratha Prince of the province of Berar which borders on Bengal and which extends to the uttermost limits of the Deccan, died some time ago. It is a serious loss for the nation to which he was very much attached. He has been succeeded by his brother Mudhoji about whose attitude towards the nation I know nothing so far, but I indeed presume that they cannot but be favourable to us, because of the hatred he bears against the English with whom the situation of his territory brings him into continuous disputes and quarrels.

Madouram, one of the Maratha Chiefs on the side of Delhi, has also died, but this accident has not brought about any change in the affairs

of the Empire.[19] He has been replaced by another Chief by name Sendia (Shinde) with whom I am on the best terms and who ardently desires our alliance because of its utility to the execution of his projects which will soon blaze out against the districts of Kora and Benares, and by a necessary corollary, against Bengal. That is what I am going to explain in the course of this letter after rendering an account of the different events.

The death which took place at Kabul of the famous Abdali who, from an ordinary chopdar of Nadir Shah, had raised himself to the great title of Shahenshah, King of the Kings, after establishing a large monarchy composed of several provinces which he had seized by force of arms from Persia and from Hindustan, and after conquering Delhi twice when he had obliged the present Emperor to marry one of his daughters, his death, I repeat, has given rise to greatest troubles today in all this part. It leaves two claimants to the crown in the person of his two sons, the elder one by name Taimur Shah and the younger Suleman Shah. The latter got himself recognised by the army in the absence of his brother who was at Bukhara. The latter, after getting news of it, immediately raised an army to fight his adversary. As the kingdom of their father is the result of his conquests from Hindustan and from Persia during the period of the troubles which agitated these two empires, the Great Mughal and the King of Persia will profit by these two circumstances to bring back under their rule what was usurped from them, and consequently, the two claimants will be equally thwarted by their quarrel. I know that it was the intention of the Great Mughal to turn his arms on that side and abandon for a time his projects on the provinces of the government of Shuja-ud-daulah as well as on Bengal, which I would have ardently desired because I considered it very important that he should attempt nothing on this side until our troops which he demands were with him to serve him as a support and bring under his rule these rebel provinces by following the project which I had the honour to submit to you and which I persist in considering as the surest for adoption. But the present circumstances will oblige him to change his plans. The strange event that befell him only two months ago and which was only a momentary affair, would certainly surprise you, my Lord, if you did not know how this country is open to frequent revolutions. He quarrelled with the Marathas, his allies and protectors. Its cause was the continual tutelage in which they hold him, requiring that he did nothing except by their

dictation, and plundering under his name all the provinces and appropriating all the booty. The Prince, annoyed and tired of this conduct, wanted to set his house in order. The Marathas, aware of his weakness, insulted him in a mocking tone; a fight ensued in which his troops were cut to pieces and he was forced to take refuge in the fort of Delhi. He was closely pursued and besieged by the Marathas to whom he was obliged to surrender unconditionally. They allowed him to keep the throne, but at the same time, demanded the gift in full proprietorship of the districts of Kora, Benares (Allahabad) and Gaya. The first borders on the second, the second is under the government of Shuja-ud-daulah and the third forms part of that of Patna. This Nawab is quite determined not to allow the Marathas to seize them. He therefore raised troops on all sides to oppose them. The English will support him with all their forces in this project because of their interest to remove from their neighbourhood a power as dangerous as that of the Marathas who have besides a legitimate and vested right on the fourth part of the revenues of Bengal, which they have already repeatedly demanded since the time the English enjoy them, but which the latter have always refused. In their turn, the Marathas will not accept its denial. The three districts which are granted to them are a very dainty morsel. That of Benares alone produces 80 lakhs (rupees) or 20 millions (francs) worth of revenues, that of Kora nearly as much and that of Gaya about 20 lakhs. It can therefore be considered as definite that there is shortly going to be a very brisk and very destructive war between the former, Shuja-ud-daulah and the English. Even Bengal could considerably suffer from it because of all the parties which the Marathas are sure to dispatch there to create a diversion as well as to enrich themselves from the plunder.

In the midst of all this situation, I shall not remain idle at all. I have persuaded the French party which was in the service of Bassalat Jang, formerly commanded by Zéphir and since his death by the so-called Gardé, to offer its services to the Emperor. For this purpose, I have dispatched, with the approval of the whole corps, M. Mottereau, a reputed officer in this unit, to Delhi where he is to negotiate this affair. It can be considered in advance as concluded, if the Emperor wishes to pay for the expenses which will be demanded from him for the transport of the troops as well as for their maintenance. They consist of six hundred Europeans, very well equipped with arms and disciplined, 900 topases

or black Christians, 4,000 sipahees trained in European warfare and provided with arms likewise and a train of 12 pieces of artillery. I wrote a letter to the Emperor to urge him to enlist this corps in his service and I have no doubt that he will do it without any difficulty. The circumstances and his own interests oblige him to do so more than ever, and moreover, it is his most ardent desire to have 4,000 to 5,000 French soldiers in his service. Once this unit proceeds there, it is sufficient for him to subdue all his rebel provinces, when they havn't the English at their head, especially when he is joined by the Marathas. Since they (the Marathas) have decided to seize the provinces of which I have spoken above, and they feel that they will have to fight the English, they desire as much as the Emperor that he should procure a corps of Europeans sufficiently strong and sufficiently large to oppose to them and hold them in check. It is certain that then their party will acquire a definite superiority.

As this unit of Gardé may not have many weapons, I have promised to furnish him, if he pays for them, all that we have here in our magazines in guns, mortars, cannon, bullets and grenades which are quite useless for us and are only in danger. It will be easy for me to dispatch the whole to him without giving the English the slightest wind of it. These war-provisions will be of great help to him. They would become here the prey of the enemy as soon as war happened to be declared. It is therefore better to profit by this occasion to make money from it. The gun-lock plates which M. Debraux brought with him and for which he has been advanced funds in France by the Government will thus find an advantageous opening through this channel.

This corps, when it will be in the service of the Emperor, will invest the nation with a very great reputation, and the credit which the Commandant will necessarily acquire in his service, will enable him to obtain all the advantages that could be desired. No doubt, the English will be jealous of it, but at the same time they will conceive fear and learn to respect us more than they have done it so far. Besides, a great advantage will result from it for us at a time when war happened to be declared in Europe. And the plan is to augment the unit with as many sipahees as it will be possible according to the sum which the Emperor would like to furnish for their maintenance. If he understands his interests properly, if he is not avaricious and if he is supported by the Ministry of France,

he will soon have forces capable of balancing and even subduing those of the English. The only embarrassment will be to find the guns and weapons to equip so many people. There will be a way to meet this difficulty; it is to give orders to the Governor of the Isle of France to deliver as many of them as I would demand from him to the persons I shall send to him, and I shall then undertake to dispatch them by the same persons in the places where it will be convenient to do so.

To reinforce the party of the Emperor which is the one and the only one to which it is advisable for us to be attached, out of interest as well as out of policy, I did not remain content with obtaining for him the unit of which I have just spoken. I have done likewise with the one commanded by the so-called Madec who is in the service of the Raja of the Jats. At my persuasion, he abandoned the latter who ought to be considered only as a rebel, and proceeded to Delhi. But before reaching it, he had to give a very long and very fierce fight. The Raja, having learnt that he was preparing to quit him, immediately ordered his army to march and stop him and cut his unit to pieces. But he sustained the shock with the most intrepid bravery, and after repulsing for twenty four hours successively the different attacks which were launched against him and after killing a large number of people, he retired with as much success as glory and reached almost without any loss the camp of the Emperor, who, while receiving him with the highest marks of distinction, conferred upon him the title and office of the Bakshi which is the third in the Empire immediately after the Vazir. It was about the same time when he was invested with this honour that took place the quarrel and the subsequent fight between the Prince and the Marathas to which I have referred above. On this occasion, Madec was of great help to him; he entered the fort and remained with him during all the time he was besieged. His frequent sorties caused a heavy loss among the Marathas and augmented his reputation of a brave fighter which he had already acquired and finally, when the treaty of peace followed, the Marathas, far from bearing a grudge against him for all the damage he had inflicted on them, treated him with the highest esteem, so that he enjoys today the highest reputation amongst them as well as with the Emperor. He is thus an important person today and whom it is advisable to closely attach to his nation. The thing is not difficult. He is full of zeal for it and is only waiting for the occasion to serve it. The object of his ambition is to obtain at the

present moment a Commission of a Captain. I have already asked for it from you for him, my Lord, and I think that it is desirable more than ever to confer it on him. Afterwards we can make him aspire for the Cross of St. Louis as a reward for some signal service which his position will enable him to render. He also takes an interest especially in his second-in-command who is a Frenchman by name Montmiral, and he has asked from me for him a Commission of a Lieutenant. By granting this favour to both of them it would be inducing them to lay themselves under obligations and recall them to submission from which they strayed away. The desire to return one day to their mother country and enjoy there the fruit of their labours and of their fortune, will be for them a motive to serve her well on all occasions which might occur. By thus conferring on Madec and on his second-in-command the said Commissions, it would be to discourage and sow jealousy in the party of M. Gardé if we refuse to him the same favour. I therefore hope, my Lord, that you will be kind enough to send me likewise for him a Commission of a Captain and four of Lieutenants, the name in blank, for the head of the officers of this corps. It is the welfare of the service and the interest of the nation at the present moment which induce me to ask from you this favour for them. This corps deserves still greater consideration on our part than that of Madec because it is much larger, since, as I had pointed out to you, it consists of 600 Europeans, 900 topases or black Christians, 4,000 sipahees, all equipped with arms and disciplined in the European way, and besides, a train of artillery of 12 guns mounted and served likewise. That of Madec is composed of only 200 Europeans and 3,000 sipahees. Thus indeed once he joins the other, we shall have in the capital of Hindustan an army of about 8,000 men, a force certainly very large. If, by following the project which I have suggested, we joined to it 4,000 to 5,000 Europeans which I have proposed to dispatch to the Great Mughal, we shall then have a decided superiority over the English, and no Asiatic power would be in a position to resist us, especially when we shall have the Marathas, as we have them, on our side. Their principal chief, Shinde, who is governor of the province of Ajmer near Tatta,[20] in the Gulf of Gujerat and who at present commands the army at Delhi composed of 1,00,000 cavalry, desires to be closely allied with us. The step he has taken by signing with M. Dujarday, whom I have stationed at Delhi, the conditional treaty of which the copy in Persian is attached herewith with the translation in French, serves as a proof of it. I have sent it for

your ratification. When I shall receive your orders which I request you to kindly send me, I shall regulate my conduct accordingly. It is very advantageous for us, as a measure of precaution, to attach this prince to our interests. He undertakes to join our troops when they appear on the frontiers of Hindustan, to conduct them day by day as far as the place of the meeting and to furnish them free of charge all the provisions they will need. He puts at the end, it is true, as a condition that when Bengal is captured, Madhavrao, the great Maratha Prince, who is his master, will receive all that he has to legitimately claim [21]. This article is very vague, but on the other hand, as in that it is only the weal of others and the fruit of future conquests which we put forward, it costs us little and we do not risk anything by promising everything, except to discuss at the proper time, the articles which it will please him to propose.

In virtue of this treaty, we are indeed henceforth allied and united with the Maratha power, the one which it suits us most to put in our interest, and by this means we are assured of no longer meeting any obstacle during the passage of our troops which will be dispatched to Delhi. It is the main point obtained and I now see with pleasure everything being prepared for the success of the project. The only question is to put it into execution and there is no time to lose. Our position will then become brightest and it can be reasonably considered as more secure and more solid than that of the English who will be reduced to support themselves by their own efforts alone whilst we shall be attached to the trunk of the tree which is the Emperor and then to the branches which are the Marathas. If it does not suit the views of our Government to fall on the English and attack their possessions so long as peace subsists in Europe, our troops will be occupied in bringing under the rule of the Prince all his provinces that have revolted and in subjecting them to his authority which step will give us at the outset the highest reputation and will simultaneously produce for us a source of very great riches; and consequently, if war happened to be declared between England and us, we shall be quite ready and prepared to fall on them with all the forces of Hindustan; this situation will give us at the start an inestimable advantage which almost always decides success. With what joy, my Lord, shall I see this plan adopted in France and put into execution ! In my turn, you will see that I have done all that was possible for me to prepare everything for it. Thus the only question is to continue the work so well

begun by following all the instructions that I have given in my project. The circumstances become more and more favourable to it. Here is war which becomes inevitable between the English and Shuja-ud-daulah on one side, the Emperor and the Marathas on the other, a war which will take neither one year nor two years for being terminated. The Marathas will never abandon the gift of the three districts which has just been made to them by the Emperor. The English will surrender to them their possession only when they can no longer oppose it. It therefore remains to be seen who will be the strongest. The question would soon be decided if we had 3,000 to 4,000 Europeans to join the 8,000 men whom we are going to have at Delhi.

A few days ago, my Lord, I received a letter from Kasam Ali Khan, the same to whom I have so often referred in all my correspondence. He has sent me the full and complete ratification of the treaty which I had proposed to him and which I dispatched at that time to M. le Duc de Praslin. He has attached to it two promissory notes, one for 11 lakhs on the famous banker Jagatshet and the other for 6 on the Begum [22], his mother-in-law, widow of Jafar Ali Khan, Nawab of Bengal before him. These two sums which amount to three million seven hundred fifty thousand francs would form a considerable advance and a great resource in the execution of the project, if we could feel sure that they would be paid, but I do not entertain any hope about it. They are indeed due to him, but the people of this country do not willingly part with something when they can avoid it and especially in the present case when they consider Kasam Ali Khan as an abandoned prince and without resources. However, I am going to do my best to obtain from them if not the whole at least a part. But I repeat it, my Lord, we should not count on it, and that this matter should not at all deter you from dispatching the necessary funds. I shall write to Kasam Ali Khan to induce him to send me instead of these two prcmissory notes diamonds and pearls which we shall always dispose of by selling them below their value.

The promissory note on Jagatshet, however, offers an advantage in that the Company is his debtor for about three lakhs to this day. When they will demand their repayment as they continuously do it everyday, we can present to them their own promissory note in payment and withhold on account from its value the total amount of their credit. This is the reply you can give, my Lord, to their letter which they are writing

to you and which I am sending you herewith in Persian and translated into French, by which they ask from you the settlement of their account. If you approve of this course, I beseech you to kindly send me your orders so that I shall conduct myself accordingly.

In order to encourage M. Gardé and M. Madec, would you think fit, my Lord, to have a letter of goodwill dispatched to them on your behalf by which while assuring them full confidence in your kindness, you would exhort them at the same time to never lose sight of the interests of the nation and to remain faithfully attached to it ? They would be extremely flattered by this honour which will create in their mind the best effect.

We should no longer rely on anything on the part of Shuja-ud-daulah at the present moment, although at the bottom of his heart, he detests the English. His personal interest necessarily attaches him to them today, and it will be so, so long as he finds himself threatened by the Marathas and so long as the latter intend to deprive him of his territory and seize it. As it is to our advantage that the Marathas should have the upperhand in the war which they are going to undertake and that consequently we should favour them as much as it is possible for us to do so, I am going to inform all the Frenchmen in the service of Shuja-ud-daulah that it is no more advisable for them to remain there and that the welfare of the nation demands that they should all proceed to Delhi and get attached to the Emperor.

The English have just received two new warships of 64 guns which combined with the four and two frigates which they already have in India form a big squadron. Their conduct proves how they are far-sighted and how they have been preparing themselves for a long time past for the events which may occur. It is an example very worthy of being emulated. I am told that these two ships have come only to replace the two others which are going to return to England. But I don't trust sharpers. The neighbourhood of the Isle of France gives umbrage to them, against which they will continuously try to secure themselves, and it must be agreed that they are not wrong, since it is true that this advantageous position offers us great resources and great facilities at a time when we shall wish to awaken ourselves from our slumber and attempt in this country some dazzling blow which it would be so easy to strike successfully.

I have only just received news from Kandahar; I learn that everything has calmed down there by the death of the two sons of Abdali which leaves the third master of the kingdom of his father without a rival [14]. There is little likelihood now of the Emperor of Delhi and the King of Persia making some attempt to recover the territory which was usurped from them on that side. Apart from the fact that it would not perhaps be easy to attempt it, the government of Hindustan is agitated by too many troubles at the present moment. It is said that that of Persia is not less so.

I hope, my Lord, that the events of war which is preparing and which we ought to consider as inevitable between the Marathas and the English will not stand in the way of the leave which I have asked for. I shall be of no use therein if the Government refuses to participate in it, and I beseech you then to kindly give a favourable ear to the fresh solicitations which I take the liberty to repeat on this subject.

I am most respectfully,

My Lord,

Your very humble and very obedient servent,

CHEVALIER.

C^2 128, f. 47-52

Chandernagore, 15th April 1773

My Lord de Boynes,

Minister and Secretary of State,

Department for the Navy.

My Lord,

Since the letters I wrote to you by the ship Le Boyne, no event of any significance has yet taken place. The Marathas have proclaimed since a long time that they intended to take possession of the districts which have been granted to them by the Emperor, but the domestic troubles and the misunderstanding which prevails on the side of Delhi between them, the Emperor, the Jats and the Ruhelas, have held them back, with the result that there is no indication of their coming to close quarters this year. The rainy season is very near and it prevents especially the

cavalry from entering into a campaign. The English continue to remain encamped with all their forces on the frontiers of the kingdom of Shuja-ud-daulah in order to be ready against the incursions of the Marathas, if they took it in their head to attempt any. The report goes that since the death of Madhavrao, great Prince of the Marathas, and since his successor Raghunathrao has assumed the reins of government, dissensions have taken place among the principal chiefs of this nation, and that those who commanded the army at Delhi—there was little agreement between them on the operations to be followed—have been recalled and will be shortly relieved by others in whom the new prince, who is said to be very determined to follow the projects of his predecessor against the English, has placed all his confidence. All these changes are going to cause great delays, and I consider them as very advantageous for us, since they will give you the time, my Lord, to put into execution the project which I had dispatched to you. If you judge that it suits the nation, and if you also find it as sure as it is so really, since once again there is no doubt that if we had at Delhi a respectable army of four to five thousand men to whom would be easily joined the sipahees in such numbers as we would like, all the powers of Hindustan would not be in a position to resist it, not more than the English themselves whose ruin would become certain from the moment we would decide to attack them in their establishments accompanied by the forces of the Emperor and by those of the Marathas. Those of the first are less than nothing really speaking, but we shall not need them. His name would alone suffice us and we would use it on all the occasions according as our interests would demand it. The Marathas hold him today tied to the harshest yoke; forced to live in Delhi, they hardly leave him the shadow of royalty and the part which is left to him from the revenues hardly suffices to maintain his dignity. There is reason to fear that perhaps in some moment of despair, he may once agian throw himself into the hands of the English. That would be an extreme measure of which he knows all the hardships because experience of the past has sufficiently taught him how little he should expect from that side. But the most pressing trouble is always the one which we try to avoid without often reflecting too much whether the one towards which we run, to avoid the one from which we suffer, is not much more dangerous and much more intolerable. Besides, I am also assured that, that may be the case, that he will resolve upon this course only when he loses all hope of putting his confidence in us.

I have at present with me an agent on his behalf and on that of the Marathas. He came a few days ago and brought me letters from both the sides in which most ardent solicitations are employed to invite us to participate in the common cause and to join our forces to those which are at Delhi. Especially the Emperor continues to express hopes that we shall dispatch to him 4,000 to 5,000 men which he has demanded. But on the other hand, as he has not allocated in advance the funds which would be necessary for a similar expedition, if it was approved in France, I took the opportunity to gain time by confining myself to say that without money he should not count on anything on our side. The agent who is a respectable man at the Prince's Court and who enjoys his confidence, understands its necessity and will accordingly write to him. Before he receives a reply, some four months will pass. If, they decide to pay the sum which I demand in advance, about which I have great doubts in the present circumstances, I shall still have many evasions at my disposal to tide over the difficulty without committing myself. During all that time, my Lord, I could receive your views on the project which I have sent you in September last. I am devising my plans in comformity with a letter of Le Chevalier de Ternay [23] which he must have passed on to you last month. Consequently, you could send me your orders by the ships sailing in May or June; they will reach me in November or December, and it is then that I can finally negotiate.

The treaty which this envoy is instructed to propose to me on behalf of the Prince and on that of the Marathas is most complete and most advantageous for us. Provided that we furnish the four to five thousand men which they demand, they offer us to pay for all the costs and the expenses, grant us the full liberty of trade without excepting from it any branch in the whole of Hindustan and free from all dues, cede to us the possessions which we could reasonably demand or if we preferred, to pay us an annual revenue which will be agreed upon; if, by joining in the capacity of auxiliaries to expel the English from Bengal, they managed to succeed in it, as it was bound to happen with so many forces, they will leave us its possession on the same rights as they (the English), provided we undertake to pay annually thirty lakhs to the Emperor and twenty-five to the Marathas, in virtue of which they undertake never to trouble us and never to join our enemies in any case. Such is, my Lord, the basis of the treaty which is proposed to us. You know its advantages very well so that it is not necessary for me to recall to you its scope. All these proposals

serve to reveal how seriously these powers seek to shake off the yoke of the English, the confidence they still have in us and how with such a disposition of mind among the people, it would be easy for us to operate a revolution which has become so necessary for our existence and for the liberty of our trade in India. Without it, we ought to consider ourselves as lost and destroyed, for, so long as the English enjoy the supreme power which they have attained, they will use it only to oppress us more and more, and by making trade impracticable for us, the only object which can retain us in this country, force us to abandon, of our own accord, the establishments which we could no longer preserve either usefully or with honour, and where they impatiently tolerate our presence so far. I indeed think that the policy of France will never lead her to give them this satisfaction; on the contrary, it is even very important for her, considering things only from the point of view of the balance in Europe, not to allow England to remain forever the only masters of a country like this one. The immense treasures which they continuously collect from it to pour them annually into London prodigiously increase their cash, and consequently, by making them the richest nation, will also make them the most formidable nation, since it is patent that it is with money that you can cover the land and the sea with troops and ships, that you can form allies as you like and that you foment and lead to success all the intrigues which policy can suggest.

I have as yet, my Lord, no news from M. Mottereau about whom I had spoken to you in my last letters. I think that he must have arrived at Delhi, and I am sure he has communicated to me after his arrival there the progress of his negotiation, but the country is so full of troubles and the routes so infested with robbers that the letters reach with difficulty. For a very long time I have not received any from M. Dujarday and Madec. I have learnt indirectly that the latter, disheartened by the indolence of the Emperor and by his irresolution, had decided to quit his service and get enlisted in that of the Marathas. I would be very sorry if he took this step, because at all events, it suits us better to be attached to this Prince than to any other.

There is in Delhi a German Jesuit missionary by name Wendel who is very suspect in my opinion. This man, instead of devoting himself to the duties of his state, dabbles in trade and politics and receives a pension from the English for serving them as a spy and giving them an account

of everything that takes place at Delhi. Unfortunately, he claims not to depend on any superior of the Missions and as he considers himself as a volunteer, it is not easy to remove him from this place.

Jagatshet seems to have changed his mind with regard to the letters which he had first proposed to write to you as well as to the Controller-General to demand the payment of the amount due to him by the nation. He gave me to understand that he was afraid that such letters might render him suspect in the eyes of the English and might lead them to think that he was plotting something against them. But the true motive is that he has begun to bestir himself in order to obtain the payment of the dues. He has already approached on this subject Mr. Middleton, English Resident at Murshidabad, who has written to me about it. My reply was that I had already informed the Ministry of France about this affair and that I was awaiting a reply.

The new English Governor, Mr. Hastings, in spite of the good promises he had given me at the time of the visit I paid him, and this spirit of equity which he had paraded before me, does not appear to be better disposed with respect to us than his predecessors. Every day we endure fresh oppressions of which the Council gives you an account. In case they do not appreciate in France the project of a revolution in India, it would then be necessary to conclude at least a treaty between the two nations which would establish the rights of our trade. I had proposed to this Governor that we should both work for it conjointly and conditionally. I would have abided by that of which a mention is made in one of my letters to M. le Duc de Praslin, dated 30th December 1768, but it appears that he is not inclined to do so, since he has always avoided to reply to this item whenever I mentioned it to him in my letters; hence we can conclude that he follows in this matter the genius of his nation which is not to c ede anything, but indeed rather to keep everything as long as it can do so.

The office of the Fouzdar or Governor of Hougly which cost the English Company Rs. 6,000 per month has just been abolished. But as they wish to preserve a phantom who can be used in case of need to incite quarrels and chicaneries against our trade, they have substituted in the place of this Fouzdar a kind of an invested officer who will consent to all the moves which would be required of him, by paying him a salary of Rs. 200

We have in different parts of Hindustan and even in Delhi a number of Frenchmen whom hunger and misery have driven from here and who are spread inland where they exhibit a conduct which dishonours the nation. Already several of them have attracted attention by their treacheries which sufficiently denote what they are capable of. A certain Quiblier, a dismissed employee, went to an English Colonel by name Goddard to tell tales full of calumnies and impostures against M. Gentil whom he tried to render suspect. If this man returns here as I learn, I think it my duty, my Lord, to get him arrested and send him back to France by the earliest ships to give an account of his conduct. Various other complaints, almost similar, which I have received from several other places, impel me to be very strict in preventing any Frenchman from escaping in future to go and increase the number of bad subjects. It is advisable to send back to France or to the Isle of Fiance those who havn't enough to subsist on here rather than expose them to be obliged to have recourse to ways as low and as infamous to live.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

CHEVALIER

C² 128, f. 58-67

Chandernagore, 3rd October 1773

My Lord de Boynes,

Minister and Secretaiy of State,

Department for the Navy.

My Lord,

The situation in India has remained almost the same since my last letters. Kora is in the possession of the English; they seized it during the period of the rains in the absence of the Marathas, a major part of whose forces continues to remain in Delhi. It is known publicly that they will advance in formidable numbers to recover this district as soon as fine weather turns the roads negotiable and the rivers are dried, which takes place in the month of Novemver and December. Indeed it is not believable

that they will leave the English peaceful masters of a territory which belongs to them by virtue of the gift which has been made to them by the Emperor who alone had the right to dispose of it. It is, however, true that in this affair, as in almost all the others, private interest could really be detrimental to public weal. There is no doubt that the English, during the rainy season which will shortly end, got all the imaginable springs moved to sow dissension among the different generals of the Maratha army. They are a people easy to currupt. English money will consequently always have much influence on their mind and it is sufficient that they could win over one or two principal chiefs so that the others cannot do them any harm, and that they could also cause the failure of the plan of operations which would have been meditated. That is what we shall soon discover.

The Great Mughal continues to be at Delhi almost without power without liberty and with very little money.[16] The district of Delhi and a part of that of Agra, both framed out for about forty lakhs (rupees) or ten millions (francs), are, out of all his kingdom, the only territory at his disposal and where his orders are recognised. The governors of all the other provinces profit by his weakness to evade his authority and even to excuse themselves from sharing with him the revenues of the territory they govern. When the Prince complains bitterly about it to the Marathas, the latter merely dispatch detachments to force them to contribute but they afterwards retain the sums which they obtain under pretexts of expenses which they have incurred, so that this unfortunate Prince hardly gets more relief and comfort from his friends than from his enemies. It is true that his pusilanimity and his irresolution are partly the cause of it. Incapable of any vigorous action, he is still more so to follow and put into execution different plans which were proposed to him to extricate himself from his bondage, or at least to make himself a little more independent; but in the mediocre condition in which he is, he considers as more prudent to preserve it rather than risk losing everything. His position also, it must be agreed, is most embarrassing. He has been betrayed so many times by those who surround him and whom he considered as his servants most attached to his person, that it is not surprising that he does not have confidence in anyone and that he mistrusts all to-day. Only a corps of European troops similar to that which, in my last memorial, I proposed to maintain at his Court, would be capable of reawakening

his torpor and restoring to him all the rights of his power by bringing his provinces under his rule. He knows it and desires it, but his avarice renders the preliminary expenses frightening to him. His mistrust leads him to fear that the advances, which I have demanded from him as necessary in case the Government of France would like to champion his cause, may turn into a pure loss, that is to say that we may appropriate them to ourselves without afterwards fulfilling the conditions to which we would have agreed. In vain have I used all the reasoning which might inspire in him confidence, there are moments when he appears inwardly convinced of the force of my arguments and when you would think that he would act accordingly, but soon his irresolution, which is the fundamental trait of his character, stops him and prevents him frcm arriving at any decision. Those who govern him most, maintain him in these sentiments, because they have interest in it and because they are afraid of losing the influence they enjoy by the slightest change which might take place, even if it was favourable to their master. It is nontheless true that if he found some certainty in us, that is to say that if he saw a large corps of troops ready to march and proceed to his Court, he would then assume full confidence and would no longer hesitate to incur the expenses which he would then admit as necessary and properly employed. But till then, he will always remain in his state of indecision, will eternally promise and accomplish nothing. This reason, moreover, ought not to prevent the execution of the plan which I have proposed, because its success does not become the less assured and because, from the moment our troops make their landing and proceed to Delhi, we shall soon have all the means necessary for their subsistence and their maintenance, and I still continue to persist in the opinions I have expressed. We are sure of the alliance of the Marathas and we shall be still more so, when they see us in force and resolved to undertake, conjointly with them, the enterprise in question. We are certain that the majority of other princes will seek our friendship in order to have in us protectors capable of dispelling the storm which they would see preparing on their head, once the Emperor was united to us. We are besides sure that the latter, when he learns that such a formidable corps is in march to come to his succour, will then sincerely confide in us and will not spare any means likely to hasten a revolution so fortunate and so favourable for him. I received a shrot time back a letter that this Prince, as he dares not feel sure that he will find in the French the succours which he desired, had called to his help his nephew, Taimur Shah, son

of the famous Abdali and his successor, that the latter had promised to come to his assistance and that consequently, he was making his preparations, but I doubt whether he can do it and the thing is not even believable. Firstly, he is not yet established in a sufficiently stable manner in his kingdom where he has to fear everything on the part of his brothers whose death had been wrongly pronounced and who are only waiting for the occasion to dethrone him and usurp his place. Secondly, he knows that Karim Khan, King of Persia, would not fail to profit by his absence to recover possession of the provinces which, he claims, form part of his kingdom and which Abdali had seized during the past troubles with which Persia was agitated. Thirdly, and finally, his enterprise would become perilous because he must give many fights and win several victories before reaching Delhi. The Sikhs who have been all along implacable enemies of his father and who are his today, will not give him a passage through their territories; a part of the Pathan princes will oppose it likewise. He must thus first begin with a serious war and in which he must be victorious before reaching the destination. Can it be believed that he is rash enough to undertake such a hazardous enterprise, which, if it did not meet with the necessary success, would undoubtedly make him lose his kingdom, and all that for coming to the assistance of an uncle from whom he cannot expect anything and with whom perhaps he would still be obliged to quarrel for obtaining the payment for his expenses. Let us, moreover, add that in order to return to his own country, he would meet on the way as many obstacles as he had to surmount while coming out of it. All these reflexions ought to convince us that the Emperor is vainly deluding himself on this side, that he has nothing to expect from it, that consequently, he can no longer find any other resources except in us and that if he still cannot get them, he is destined to live forever in his state of bondage and captivity.

The English, masters of the district of Kora as I have mentioned above, have in addition joined to it that of Allahabad which is adjacent to it. As they find these two districts too distant from their possessions of Bengal, because they are separated from it by the kingdom of Shuja-ud-daulah, the Governor of Calcutta left two months ago to meet this prince with the intention of negotiating with him for these two districts and to propose to him an exchange against that of Benares and its dependances. Shuja-ud-daulah who realised how such a proposal was disadvantageous to him.

never wanted to consent to it and openly said that he would rather resolve to give up everything he possessed. This firmness astonished the Governor who expected quite a different response in view of the pomp which he had displayed in this journey to which he was accompanied by more than ten thousand Europeans and sipahees. However, he did not think it advisable to use violence as he could have done so; the circumstances are not favourable for it because of their expectation of an attack by the Marathas. The matter was thus postponed [24] probably to a better occasion and they left each other with such great mistrust that it would be possible that Shuja-ud-daulah to-day would change all his policy by turning against the English, especially if he could place some confidence in the Emperor and his allies the Marathas. All this up to the present moment is merely a conjecture, and we shall have better information in a few months.

The English who formerly paid to the Great Mughal a pension of 24 lakhs [25] or six millions from the revenues of Bengal, have just withdrawn it, enraged at the fact that this Prince had granted the 2 districts of Kora and Allahabad to the Marathas and had thus placed in their neighbourhood such a turbulent and such a restless power. The Emperor, in his turn, is very much offended by the attitude of the English and rightly finds it very extraordinary that they should intend to deprive him of the right to dispose of the districts of his Empire. In the midst of this situation, sane reason would seem to indicate that the combined powers of the Emperor and of the Marathas ought to have become irreconciliable with the English and ought to try all the possible means to harm them; however, what is taking place to-day, makes their policy inconceivable. The Marathas ought to consider themselves in a state of war declared against the English, since they seized from them the two districts which had been granted to them, and consequently, join their enemies on all sides. Nevertheless, their behaviour is quite different at the present moment, since they quietly allow the English of Madras to attack the Raja of Tanjaour, who is of the Maratha caste, on the Coromandel Coast without going to his succour, although they fully know that he will be finally forced to succumb, that the English power augments by the acquisition of the richest and most fertile territory on the whole coast. It is really difficult to understand such a conduct unless it is true that the English have purchased this lethargy by means of money spread among the principal

nobles of the Maratha Court, and it is thus that venality will forever ruin the Asiatic princes.[26]

For a long time I was curious to examine the extent of the English power in Bengal, in its central point. Consequently, about two months ago, I went to Murshidabad under the pretext of paying a visit to an English friend of mine who governs and occupies the office of a Resident at the Court of the Nawab. There I saw this phantom several times and found him with astonishment in such a subjection that I had not formed a real estimate of it to myself. He is treated there as the most ordinary servant, and they do not even keep up with him appearances and show him considerations which would appear to be necessary *vis-a-vis* a machine which is preserved to impose upon the public and to set it into motion in all the cases when it is needed. His bearing and his appearance sufficiently proclaim how he feels the state of humiliation in which he is kept, and his palaces and pleasure houses which I had seen so brilliant and so rich in the times of his predecessors, demonstrate, by the state of ruin in which they are, how modest is the pension which is given to him and how little sufficient it is to maintain his dignity of which there no more remains but an empty name which will be the sport of the whole of Murshidabad even in the eyes of the common people who were accustomed to revere their Nawabs and pay them their homage as to a Deity. The Court of the latter is entirely deserted and you see around him only his servants and other people who live at his expense. For his guard, he has a battalion of sipahees commanded by English officers who accompany him wherever he goes, so that all his actions are known to them; they even know what takes place inside his seraglio by means of eunuchs whom they have bought by money and presents.

Because of their fear that the Marathas would attack them after the rains, they are keeping all their troops on the frontier, which makes them incur a huge expense. That will probably be the greatest damage they will suffer, for, I do not think that the Marathas, so long as they are left to their own forces, will dare attack them openly, and if they do it, they have no chance of success in it. The type of war of these sorts of light troops is not to fight resolutely and hold their own against cannon and musketry. But it is by destroying everything by fire and carnage that they impress the terror of their name wherever they pass. It would indeed be the better tactics to employ to soon subdue the English, and I do not know why so

far they have not made use of it; they can easily do it without risks since it is impossible for the English infantry to ever join a light cavalry which never trails either any train or any encumbrance after it and whose horses cover 60 kms in a day. But it appears to me that a lucky star presides over their (of the English) preservation and striks their enemies with a blindness which prevents them from discerning the method in which they ought to set about to succeed. If this star, which I mention here, has no hand in it, then it must be their money or their intrigues,[26] and as a matter of fact, it is certain that it is to these two causes that they owe all their good fortune and that they will continue to owe it as long as they will not have to face another nation which is in a position to use their own weapons against themselves.

The squadron which they maintain in India is composed of six warships and two frigates. Admiral Harland, who commands it, is waiting for Admiral Pye, who, it is reported, is on the way to succeed him with four other ships which will replace the four which are recalled to England. It is the Nawab of Arcot who, the rumour goes, pays for the expenses of this squadron. That is very convenient and very well contrived. By this means, not only does it not cost them any expense but they also continue to maintain the superiority from the commencement of the war, if ever it is declared in Europe, and destroy our establishments and our ships before France has time to dispatch there her succours. To balance such forces, it would be necessary for us to maintain in these seas a similar squadron, but the expenses stop us. Thus it will always be because of want of money on our part and because of abundance which the English enjoy and the means it procures them that they preserve over us this superiority which, however, it is so important to demolish. To succeed in it, I shall continue to repeat it, we must pour troops into Hindustan, form alliances there, support the Prince there at his expenses. It is the only means to win respect for us, to form a formidable party for ourselves and also share with the English riches which we lack and which the latter enjoy for so many years to use them one day to our detriment and even for our complete destruction.

The actual revenues which the English enjoy here prove how Bengal is a territory rich, fertile and full of resources. It was imagined at the time of this mortality which carried away three or four millions of souls, that these same revenues ought to diminish in proportion to the damage

caused by the scourge; the very reverse took place. The districts continued to pay the same taxes; they were even increased last year by a sufficiently large margin, so that it is certain that the English annually enjoy in Bengal about 90 millions, not including what they will derive from the two districts of Kora and Allahabad, if they remain with them, and of which they have raised the revenues to nearly sixty lakhs or fifteen millions. What riches and what influence, and at the same time what facility there would be to shake it by making use of the proper methods to succeed in it ! They are the ones I have indicated in my letters and in my memorial last year.

The envoy who was dispatched to me by the Emperor and the Maratha generals who were at Delhi, of whom I made a mention by the last ships, continues to stay with me, and does not wish to return to his master unless he sees some certain progress in the result of his mission. I continue to support him with good words by giving him proof of all the good will of the Court of France for the Emperor of Delhi. Every vessel which arrives, excites his curiosity to a point which becomes embarrassing to me. Finally, my Lord, when I receive your reply to the plan which I have proposed, when it will disclose to me your intentions, I shall then give him a definite reply from which he must take his decision. In the meanwhile, this man causes us a lot of expense, being obliged to pay for him and his retinue, of course under the name of a merchant from Gujarat who has come to establish himself in our colony.

Madec quarrelled with the Emperor, left him and enlisted himself in the service of Shinde, Maratha general. Although the latter is in our interests, I am sorry at the event, because it was much more important for us to have a corps of troops at Delhi than with a Maratha. It was an ill-temper with which Madec was disgusted and which led him to leave the service of the Prince. I intend to point out to him my displeasure.

I do not know likewise what reasons could have prevented M. Garde, commandant of the troops of Zéphir in the service of Bassalat Jang, from proceeding to Delhi, after sending me for this purpose one of his officers by name Mottereau with whom I had agreed on everything and to whom consequently I had given the necessary letters for the Court of the Emperor. It is more than six months now that I have not received news from this quarter and it is almost the same period during which no

news has reached me from Delhi. Rains and bad roads are apparently the cause of it. Now that these will become more negotiable, I hope I shall soon receive news.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

CHEVALIER

$C^2$138, f. 77-85 v°

Chandernagore, February 2, 1774

My Lord de Boynes,

Minister and Secretary of State,

Department for the Navy.

Political affairs

My Lord,

Since my letter written on October 3, marked Political affairs, I have at last received news from Delhi and several parts of Hindustan, which gives me information about the various important events which have taken place during the last rainy season.

The Marathas, who were said to be descending into Bengal to wreak vengeance upon the English for their opposition to hand over possession of the provinces of Allahabad and Kora of which they had obtained a grant from the Emperor, did not make their appearance, and have even entirely evacuated the province of Delhi and its neighbourhood. A grave revolution, which took place in Poona, the capital of their Prince, required the presence of all the army chiefs there.

For a long time, there had been prevailing a great disagreement among the members of the ruling family. Narayanrao, their prince, became the victim of it. One of his generals, by name Raghunathrao, had him assassinated. This revolution, while it caused a change in the ruler, has also brought about a change in the political views of the Government: a new policy has been initiated. The English, who are always vigilant

about their own interests and who rightly feared in this part an early invasion on the part of the Marathas, turned these circumstances to account by purchasing through 20 lakhs or 5 millions a peace which will last as long as the latter will be diverted from their project, which they have always cherished, of entering into possession of the two provinces of which the English have deprived them and which they have recently sold to the Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah for a sum of fifty lakhs or twelve million five hundred thousand francs, and an annual rent of 24 lakhs or six millions. This last stroke of policy on their part is, in my opinion, a master-stroke. By it they have interested this Nawab in the defence of a territory which is far removed from theirs and which he is going to consider as his own property, and if ever the Marathas come in force to conquer it, they have secured in advance a powerful ally who will pay for all the expenses of the war, because they can indeed get him to pay for all the succours which they will furnish him. Moreover, they derive from it the advantage of placing a formidable barrier between their possessions and the enemy and thus protect their frontiers against him. These are excellent lessons for us. Well, when will Heaven enable us to turn them to account!

Since the Marathas left Delhi, the Emperor is at last freed from the tutelage in which they held him. He has availed himself of the circumstance to seize the province of Agra from the Ruhelas [27]. The latter offered all possible resistance, but the defeat they sustained in two consecutive battles obliged them to yield and sue for peace by offering a huge sum. It appears that it will be granted to them. The jealousy which the Emperor feels for his general Najaf Khan, the fear that his victories may win him too much prestige, will prevent him from pushing further his conquests. Probably he will soon lapse into this lethargy and this indolence which are the essential features of his character. It is not pusillanimity in him, he does not lack courage but he shuns pains and labour, prefers slothful tranquillity and does not trust any one at his Court. Each one, in his opinion, is a traitor and a rogue, and I think he is not wrong. He relies much on his nephew Taimur Shah whom he vainly calls to his succour from Kandahar. It is not possible for the latter to leave his kingdom where his power is still not so well established and where he might have to face a deadly revolution if he absented himself from it.

He has recently written to his agent with me to find out what help he should expect from us. The latter eagerly pressed me to give him a categorical reply, which was that in spite of all the goodwill which the nation felt for his master, it was futile to expect anything until he had paid in advance a sum sufficient to defray the expenses, which the succours he demanded necessarily entailed. When he saw that he could not get anything better from me, he wanted me to allow him to return to Delhi, promising that he would soon return and that I would have good reason to feel satisfied. As he feared that he would be arrested by the English if he were to pass through Bengal, he requested me to arrange to convey him to Masulipatam. I complied with his request, taking advantage for this purpose of the King's store-ship la Seine which was leaving for Pondicherry, commanded by M. La Perouse.

I am trembling at this very moment lest this man may induce his master to open his treasure. Thereby he will put me in a great embarrassment, but I shall always be free to gain time until the arrival of your orders, my Lord. I shall get off with keeping his money, if it is sent to me, and with returning it to him if the plan, which I have proposed, is not approved and if it does not agree with the present views of the Ministry to form an alliance with this prince and furnish him succours which he demands from us, in spite of the enormous advantages of every kind which would result therefrom for the nation and which I have explained in my memorandum.

The Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah, who appears to be so very intimate with the English, yields more in his attitude to circumstances than to his inclination. His heart is embittered by all the affronts he had suffered at their hands in the past and will always be willing to turn against them if he finds a suitable opportunity to do so. He is ambitious and full of courage, is fond of glory and impatiently bears the yoke to which he is subjected.

Recently, during a private conversation with M. Gentil, and of which the latter has given me an account, they happened to talk together about my Lord Clive. M. Gentil said to him, what is indeed true, that this English General had proposed to his Court to pay off all the national debts estimated at the present times at 150 million pounds sterling, if it would furnish him 8,000 troops, to be entirely at his disposal, and leave him in full control of all his operations. The Nawab replied that my Lord Clive had not at all promised in his offer more than he (himself) would

have been in a position to carry out, and that he would himself undertake such a deal with the same number of European troops and complete it in six or seven years' time. This statement opens, my Lord, a vast field for reflexion and politics.

I know that the project of my Lord Clive is not at all abandoned, that it is even considered as possible and that from time to time it is brought up for consideration in England. And I would not be surprised that its execution is seriously thought of, if, as it is really contemplated, the English Government seizes the territorial possessions of the Company in India, by reducing it to its commercial activities alone.

In that case, what infinite power would England attain, once she is released of her huge debts and consequently of the colossal interest under the weight of which she is crushed! What immense wealth would she then find in her own resources and next through it, what enterprise would lie beyond her strength, with her powerful marine which she could expand still further and the various strings she could pull in all the Courts of Europe!

This idea need not be considered as romantic. Not only is it possible, but I even claim that it is easy of attainment, and I rightly fear that, unfortunately for us, the English give us proof of it, perhaps much sooner than is thought of. The fact of the rapidity with which General Barkar recently advanced as far as the gates of Delhi with a simple body of 1,200 Europeans and 6,000 sipahees, must not be overlooked. He would have captured it, if he had not been stopped in his course by the repeated orders of the Calcutta Council [28]. The latter's reason for doing so was the fear that all its forces being removed to a distance of more than 300 leagues and Calcutta as well as the rest of Bengal being thus depleted, our nation, whom it always suspects as occupied with forming projects against it, might turn to account such an excellent occasion to unexpectedly make an irruption in Bengal the success of which might have been really assured in such a circumstance. That is then, at least up till now, how the neighbourhood of the Isle of France and the numerous garrison which it is so important to maintain there, has been useful to us, since its presence alone holds them in check and prevents them from giving full scope to their enterprising genius. It is certain that without the fear they have of us, the limits of the whole Mughal Empire would hardly suffice their ambition, and it is equally certain that they would never

allow an occasion to escape to satisfy it and aggrandize themselves, when they are convinced that they are in a position to do so without any risk. It is therefore in our interest to forever bar its route to them, and once again the only means we have to place boundary-posts before them is to maintain a powerful army in the service of the Emperor and at his expense. Once this step is taken, all their plans for the future will vanish and they will at least be forced to confine themselves within the limits of their possessions until the circumstances permit us to humble them and found, in our turn, our power and our greatness on their ruin.

While we would be putting into execution this plan which offers us so many advantages of every kind without any danger or any difficulty, that would not prevent us from zealously pursuing the projects which I have suggested in my letter marked "trade, Goa, Manila and the two Andaman Islands". If we succeeded in establishing ourselves there, then masters of all these places as well as of Hindustan in the name of the Prince whom we would support, our power would be raised in all the parts of India to a height of glory which no other nation has yet ever reached.

The events, which took place at the Court of the Maratha Princes at Poona and to which I have referred above, have prevented this nation from running to the succour of Tanjaour which has been attacked by the English. But today as the troubles of this Court are over, it appears resolved to go and avenge a Prince who is of its caste and whom it has always protected. Consequently, the latest news which has reached me from the Coast says that a large army of the Marathas had already descended as far as the Ghats, and was preparing to ravage the country up to the gates of Madras. But it may happen that the English will buy peace of them by means of money, will succeed in turning them away and retain possession of their conquest of Tanjaour. That will be the greatest harm that can befall Pondicherry which, as a result of that, will be at their mercy. Thus, we cannot rely on the Asian powers, on whose venality money will always have a powerful hold so long as we shall not have in their midst a respectable army which will become the soul of politics and of the interests of the princes of the country.

Since the death of Janoji (this Prince who showed so much attachment to the nation less perhaps out of any affection for it than because of the natural hatred which he recognized in it against the English), his kingdom, which adjoins Bengal from Cuttack, while proceeding from the North,

has fallen into the greatest disorder. All the claimants to the throne, each one on his own account, have been at war with each other which recently ended by a treaty among them which cannot last long, because of the form of government which resulted therefrom. Nouna was recognized as Raja, but he holds only the vacant title without possessing any authority. It is Raghuji who will succeed him even to the exclusion of his children. Janoji's widow remains in control of the treasurers which are estimated at a sum which surpasses all belief. Mudhoji, one of the brothers, commands the army and is charged with the levying of the taxes. As he is in control of the forces, he will surely find the means to seize the kingdom and all its treasures. I have most intimate relations with him and am assured of his inclination to help us when there is need for it.

The Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah, after paying to the English fifty lakhs which was agreed upon as the price for the two provinces of Kora and Allahabad which they have sold him, recently started with his army to take possession of them. He will not meet with any opposition today as the Marathas have left Delhi. Besides, he will always have at his disposal the English troops by paying them a handsome salary. A few days back he sought from me guns and muskets. I shall reply him with a refusal. It does not suit us to furnish him arms so long as circumstances oblige him to remain attached to the English.

The Gov ernor of Calcutta, in the interview he had with him in the month of June, strongly insisted on obtaining the recall of M. Gentil and of all the Frenchmen who are in his service, and it is felt that he will be obliged to consent to it. It will not be a great loss to us, the majority of them being a bad lot, who only dish onour the nation.

Madec continues to be in Hindustan near Narva, at the head of his corps, composed of 200 Europeans, of which the major part consists of Frenchmen, and of 2,000 sipahees with ten guns. He maintains himself with glory and distinction in the service of any Prince who can pay him. He is a fearless man, but is only a good soldier, besides, with limited views and not so educated. Nevertheless, he is in a position to render great services one day because of the respect he enjoys in the whole country, and I repeat, my Lord, the request I made you for the Commission of a Captain for him. It is the means to bind him more intimately to the nation i.e. through the hope that this rank will lead him to succeed to another.

Today he is negotiating with the Mughal Emperor who wants to engage him in his service with his corps. But they have not yet agreed on the conditions. However, I am going to induce him to conclude the negotiations. It is advisable that we should have a commander of French troops with this Prince.

M. Dujarday left Delhi to proceed to the Court of the Marathas. Accompanied by Mir Kasim, he has gone there to watch over the interests of the nation and win friends among the Maratha Chiefs. In a short time, I shall receive news of the result of his mission.

These kinds of political matters cost the administration some expenses which are paid on my bills of which I intend, my Lord, to give you myself the account in detail. But the economy I practise therein, makes them so negligible that I am sure that you will not reproach me for them. Since the last three years I do not think I have spent on this item more than Rs. 10,000. These expenses may subsequently increase. That is why I would wish I were authorized to incur them by a special order from you.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

CHEVALIER

C² 140, f. 98-104 v°

Chandernagore, 30th December 1775

My Lord de Sartine,
Secretary of State and
Minister for the Navy.

Political matters

My Lord,

The unrest which has been prevailing since many years and which is daily increasing in all the parts of the Empire of Hindustan inevitably heralds an approaching and general conflagration which can only be

extinguished by some great revolution. All the provinces that have become independent form a number of small kingdoms, each governed by a tyrant always on his guard against his neighbour as his neighbour is against him, and in continuous mistrust of his own subjects. All are in a state of war in the midst of peace. All possess armed troops for self-defence or for attacking. It's who shall strike first. Uncertainty of success holds everyone in check. But all are enemies. This situation offers an easy conquest of the whole country to the foremost power of the North which would like to undertake it. But domestic troubles which dissipate Persia do not permit her to think of it. Taimur Shah, son and successor of Abdali, who, from a simple mace-bearer of Nadir Shah, earned so much renown after the death of his master by the conquest of Delhi which he captured and pillaged twice, and by the powerful kingdom which he established at Kandahar out of the usurpations made from Persia as well as from Hindustan and which he has handed down to his posterity, is too much addicted to ease and luxury to profit by the opportunity. Besides, he would have to guard himself during his absence against the ambition of two of his brothers who have already declared war on him. These are the fortunate circumstances which have undoubtedly prevented up till now the crown of Hindustan from moving out of the House of Taimurlane and passing into foreign hands. The ruling Emperor is fully aware of the magnitude of the danger which threatens him, and he would very much like to protect himself against it, but he has neither the means nor the capacity for such a task [20]. Confined to his province of Delhi alone and a few territories depending on it, his weakness is scoffed at and his orders are disobeyed every where. However, he still possesses vast treasures which he has inherited from his ancestors and which have escaped the search and the avarice of all the conquerors who succeeded one another. But he does not know how to use them or is always afraid of taking steps which might render his condition still worse than what it is. He has been betrayed and cheated so many times by all those who surround him that he does not know whom to trust. His Koran and his women constitute all the consolation of his trials and of his worries. He has, however, a large standing army, but it is entirely subservient to the general who commands it, namely Najafkhan, who employs it only to favour his own views and ambitions, and make himself more dangerous to his master than to anyone else. With this army he recently made the conquest of the province of Agra from the Jats who had profited by the

weakness of the government to seize it, and they ruled there for several years till this moment. But he seized its riches without wanting to share either the smallest part of it or the revenues which he collects from it with the Emperor. On the contrary, he employed them in order to affirm his independence and to win over for himself the affection of the troops who serve under him. However, several corps, disgusted at this conduct, have left him and returned to the flag of their master who has just appointed another general to punish the former, and people are constantly awaiting news of some action ready to take place between the master and his subject. In the midst of rage and despair which animate the Prince, I know that he was on the point of calling the English forces to his succour and they would have been delighted to march to the place. It was the best occasion which could offer itself to hasten the execution of the project which they have been meditating since long to seize the entire monarchy. It is this reflexion which dissuaded him from this resolution, and it is a blessing for him and for the whole country. At least in his present position, however sad and unpleasant it may be, he enjoys a certain existence, and it is certain that he would cease to preserve it as soon as he would employ English help to punish his subjects. The sword which he would hand over to the latter would soon turn against himself. He would be still happy if in the state of bondage, which would be his fate, he were left with the shadow of his dignity and a modest pension to maintain its appearance. This is the point of view from which I have continuously represented to him the situation in all the correspondence I have had occasion to carry on with him. But I notice that he is slowly losing his confidence and that we are losing all credit in his mind as he sees the hopes he had conceived of the nation and the succours he had demanded and expected from it vanish. He cannot imagine how we could object to such advantageous proposals and he concludes from it that if they are not accepted, it is only out of impotency or fear. It is certain that the manner in which we are treated in all our establishments and the patience with which we have suffered it for so many years, is hardly calculated to give other ideas about us to people who can judge only from their observation and from the events of which they are witnesses.

Since Narayanrao, King of the Marathas, was assassinated by Raghunathrao who proclaimed himself in his place, the internecine

troubles and divisions caused by this event had so much occupied the body of the nation that it held aloof from external affairs. But for some time, the intelligentsia having united, Raghunathrao was treated as a vile assassinand obliged to flee. Narayanrao's son was elected and Raghunathrao took refuge with the English of Bombay. As this man had yet a great deal of resources and a large party of supporters, he proposed to the English a treaty by which, provided that they furnished him 600 Europeans, a corps of sipahees and an appropriate train of artillery, he undertook to cede to them around Bombay a very extensive territory, confirm in their favour the possession of the Island of Salsette and of Bassein and pay them in addition a large sum for the expenses which this expedition would cost. The English, who for a long time had only been seeking the occasion to humble the Maratha power, the only one which they fear and also the only one which is redoubtable, accepted these proposals without hesitation. Their troops, combined with those of this man, took the field and marched to Poona, capital of the Marathas, which contains immense riches which they have collected from their pillage and brigandage from the whole of Hindustan for more than hundred years. The latter, having received news of it, quietly allowed this army to enter their territory, after which with more than hundred thousand cavalry, they came and harassed it on all sides, intercepting the convoys and burning everywhere around them with the result that it was soon reduced to extremity. It had to decide on a retreat, but this could not be effected without incurring the loss of half the men, killed in different skirmishes as well as perished with hunger and want. The Bombay Council then began to make overtures of peace and sought for supension of hostilities, in order to arrive at a treaty which could restore harmony. Suspension was granted but the treaty was not yet concluded. The latest news, that came from Bombay, indicates that the Marathas would not hear of any arrangement until the English had first delivered to them Raghunathrao and restored to them Salsette and Bassein. At the same time they threatened to order all their forces to march and ravage the English possessions on the Coromandel Coast, in the Deccan and in Bengal. The Supreme Council of Calcutta, without the participation of which, the gentlemen of Bombay had conducted this affair, noticing that the result was not favourable, disapproved it and summoned two Councillors of this place to submit an account of it[30]. They arrived six weeks ago and immediately an English Colonel was deputed from here to proceed with all expedition by land to the Court

of the Maratha Prince. He is charged with important negotiations and especially with concluding peace at whatever price. I really think that they (the Marathas) should take a bold decision, for it is certain that if the Maratha power once happened to know its strength and the manner to use it, the English would soon be exterminated on all sides. What can they indeed do and how can they resist with their infantry and heavy artillery against an enemy whose strength consists in a light cavalry which marches 60 kms. a day and which without ever risking a battle would be satisfied with waging a destructive war? How can they prevent this cavalry from burning and pillaging the whole country, from kidnapping all its inhabitants, killing all the plough-bullocks and destroying all the manufactures ? Then, the English, without either provisions or trade or revenue, will be unable to defray their expenses, feed and maintain their troops, load their ships for Europe, and they would thus be in the absolute necessity to submit to the victor on such conditions which he would choose to dictate to them. I have therefore always asserted it, and they know it well, that if ever they can be destroyed by some Indian power, it is that of the Marathas alone which is capable of operating a revolution, and if one day we think of striking some blows in this country, we ought to begin by winning it over to our side by sacrificing everything to secure its friendship which is always at the disposal of anyone who would buy it and pay for it. It is, however, quite true, on the other hand, that to keep this nation in check and ward off its incursions, it would only be necessary to oppose to it a corps of cavalry troops in a position to repulse its own; then it would be possible to attack it in its own dominions. But all the revenues of the English nation in India, however vast they may be, would not suffice to pay for it and maintain it. The Marathas have nothing to pay. The subjects of this nation are obliged to muster under its standards as soon as there is a question of war and each one furnishes horses and weapons at his expense. Pillage constitutes their pay and the contributions pass into the public treasury with the exception of a portion which is assigned to the generals for their expenses and for encouraging them to perform their duty. The Emperor was served in the same manner when he enjoyed all his rights and his authority. He had constantly a standing cavalry of which the number was prodigious and which did not cost him anything. It was furnished to him by the owner of a multitude of fiefs belonging to the Empire and which were granted to them only on the condition of each one maintaining a Cavalry corps

which is proportional to the size and the revenue of the fief. From this it can be seen that if our political views impelled us to send to the Emperor the succours which he is asking from us, we would at once have at our disposal a large cavalry [31] which, when combined with the infantry, would make us invincible masters of the fate of our enemies. The Marathas, in their own interests, would be inclined to ally themselves with us when it will be a question of attacking the English from whom they have to recover the fourth part of the revenues which they have been enjoying since they have entered into possession thereof [32], provided the princes from whom they have usurped them were bound to pay them (to the Marathas) this tribute in virtue of an agreement which necessity had forced the Emperors in their hour of weakness to conclude with the Marathas, and by which they ceded to them the fourth part of the revenues of the Empire on condition that they would forever abstain from committing incursions into the provinces of the Empire. But as in such cases the law of "Might is Right" always prevails, the Marathas profited by this grant and none the less continued their brigandage under different pretexts whenever the opportunity offered itself to do so. They are thus unquestionably the richest nation in India which possesses immense treasures in bullion. Every year they accumulate these treasures which are never reduced by expenses. Their government is not bound to make any, the subjects almost pay no taxes; they are assigned lands which become their property; they cultivate them and all the produce is for their benefit to compensate them for all the forced duty which they owe to the State in times of war. This way everyone is a soldier and is obliged to march, and the sovereign is never short of money to maintain his armies, however large they may be. It is always the enemy's territories which feed them. Such people are redoubtable and invincible if the other party does not possess arms, which are equal to theirs, to oppose them.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

CHEVALIER

C² 156, f. 55-66v°

Chandernagore, 17th March 1777

M. de Bellecombe,
Brigadier-General of the Royal Armies,
Governor-General at Pondicherry

A reply to the questions on Bengal

Sir,

I received only on the 12th instant the letters which you addressed me by *le Bruis* and I have already acknowledged receipt of the same by land in the cover for M. Law.

The questions you have put me on Bengal, Sir, are a long and exacting labour. Especially, the memorandums require much investigation, labour and time. However, I promise you to devote myself to this task without intermission as much as current affairs, which are so multiplied that they take almost all my time, will permit me to do so, and you can rest assured that I shall consider it as a pleasure as much as duty to procure you all the information you desire and which can be useful for the King's service and the general welfare of the nation. In the meantime, here are several items on which I can satisfy you immediately.

Reply to item No. 1

All the instruments, correspondence and papers concerning Bengal are in the archives of the Council of Pondicherry which must have been handed over to the Royal administration at the time of M. Foucault's arrival. You will thus easily obtain them.

Reply to item No. 4

In the course of the year 1776, the most important events that took place between us and the English in Bengal are the outrages committed against the Royal flag in our factory at Monnepour [33] as I had the honour to inform you; the resident of the nation was removed from his room and taken to the English prison of Midnapur by a corps of sipahees with fixed bayonets, after blockading him for nine to ten months. M. Law can communicate to you all the details of this atrocious affair. I sent him all the papers, and it gave rise to a very protracted correspondence between him and the Calcutta Council.

Following these insults, there occurred that of the gun-shots fired on our ships in last August, without any other reason than the refusal of the Captains to be searched and visited, an attempt which the English had already made, but the firmness with which I opposed it had forced them to desist from it. The Minister, M. de Boynes, approved my conduct and instructed me to continue it.

Reply to item No. 7

We have no alliance with the princes of this province. Our lack of strength and resources and the state of humiliation and degradation in which we have continued to live since our re-establishment, must not have permitted it. What princes could indeed have shown confidence in us and allied themselves with a nation, itself without support, continuously insulted and tyrannized, which constantly and patiently suffers it without making the slightest effort to recover the rights of its existence and of its liberty? Far from forming alliances with us, those who have to dread something on the part of the English, avoid us as if we were attacked by a contagious disease, and the others look at us with pity or indifference. That does not mean that almost all do not have friendly feelings for us, a consequence perhaps of their hatred for the English rather than of their natural affection. But they will never do anything perhaps so long as they do not see us in a position which will command respect and regain for us the consideration which we have lost.

The alliances which suit us best are those with the Emperor and the Marathas. The former has been seeking it for a long time and still desires it. But he has lost hope in it since he has so long been fooled and put off by vague and ineffective promises. He will regain confidence only when he sees our forces march to his capital and support his throne.

The Marathas are necessary for us, less for the service to be expected from them than to prevent them, in the beginning, from doing us all the mischief of which they are capable. We would easily have them on our side, if we were strong enough, by concluding with them a treaty which was advantageous to them and which we could revoke when we would be in a position not to fear them and create awe about us. We would easily have been in this position if we had an auxiliary army of 4,000 men at Delhi. Their present hatred for the English, out of the resentment

at the protection which they have given to the traitor Raghoba, would be a favourable occasion to enlist them on our side. But our weakness prevents us from availing ourselves of these favourable dispositions. If we proposed to them an alliance, they would scoff at it and would question us on our means to execute its articles.

In the heart of Hindustan, that is to say, in the vicinity of Delhi, we would have on our side the Ruhela Pathans whose territory the English partly invaded about three years ago. After destroying and massacring several of their chiefs, they then gave it to the Vazir Shuja-ud-daulah who has paid them a good price for it. They want to recover it, and if we were in a position to furnish them means for it, our mere promises would induce them to line up under our flag. These people are the bravest in Hindustan and their strength consists in a large cavalry which is just what we would need the most. Next come the Sikhs. It's a warlike nation who, for some years past, have begun to play a great role and create an awe about them. It consists of a Republic formed of serveral cantons almost like the Swiss. When a national war takes place, all the cantons meet together to elect a chief who has an unlimited power like the dictators in the times of the Romans. When the war is over, the chief returns home or occupies some place in the government of his canton. It would be easy to negotiate with them an alliance which would cement an eternal peace with us, for we would not need their succour; it would suffice if they observed neutrality and never turned against us. Besides, if circumstances forced us to fall out with them, the conquest of their territory would be an easy thing. Once powerful at Delhi, we would be in a position to have at our disposal a cavalry equal in number to theirs; our infantry would do the rest and would soon reduce them to the obedience of the Emperor of whom they have invaded several provinces which form the principal part of their states.

Reply to item No. 8

There is no prince in Bengal to whom you can notify your arrival at Pondicherry. There is not even one who bears this name or who deserves it. There remains only one Nawab whom the English have placed on the throne there, and he is a bastard son of Mir Jafar, aged 20 or 22. His role

consists in lending them his name to molest and oppress the European nations and serve as a cloak to their injustice and to their iniquity. He is paid as a reward a pension of Rs. 50,000 per month. This is the ridiculous phantom whom the English nation vaunts so much in the whole of Europe and on whose behalf it rejects the numerous complaints lodged every year by the European nations. All the other chiefs of the region are likewise only its servants appointed by it in the different posts which they occupy; it retains them or ousts them at will according to the interests of the time.

Reply to item No. 9

The French nation, by the firmans of the Emperor of Hindustan and the paravanas of the Nawabs who succeeded each other in Bengal since it formed its establishments there, has the incontestable right to carry on trade in the three provinces of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa which constitute the Kingdom. It has by the same documents the right to multiply its establishments and its factories in all the places where the needs of its trade and its interests require it. It is these rights, so handsome and so precious, which have so much excited the jealousy of the English since they became masters of the territory and which have been the real cause of all the quarrels which I have had to uphold. They have therefore spared nothing to attack them and destroy them. They have even, it can be said, almost succeeded in it in spite of my resistance because they have bayonets and I have only sad lamentations in the form of protests to oppose. They thought quite differently when before the revolution they were on the same footing as we and had only similar rights for the security of their trade. They would even have shed the last drop of their blood to remain in possession of their rights. But to-day that the interests have changed, they have also adopted new maxims; it is to assail everything which is useful and profitable to them without bothering whether they offend the justice and the faith of the treaties. That is what gains them the law of " might is right " and us the state of weakness to which we are reduced.

Our actual establishments consist of our colony at Chandernagore, our factory at Kasimbazar, that at Patna, that at Dacca which we have been obliged to abandon, that at Jugdia and that at Balasore. We have others in different manufactured articles such as at Choupur, Kerpaye,

Caincola and Monnepour [33]. We no longer possess the last one since the English expelled our resident from it.

Reply to item No. 10

I have maps of Bengal as well as those of the English forts. Several copies of them have been sent to the Minister and to M. Law from whom you can have copies taken of them. I havn't got here a single draughtsman to do this job. M. Solminiheu, who did the job for me here, has just left the service and gone to the Isles to set up there a commercial concern.

Reply to item No. 11

We have no European resident, openly or secretly, on behalf of the nation at the courts of the native princes to get news of the events taking place there. Since nothing has been allocated for this item of expenditure, although so necessary and so important, it has been impossible for me to maintain them at these courts. It would, however, be advisable for us to have at least one at the Court of Delhi which is the centre for all the news and all the events that take place in the Empire. But the salary to be paid to him could not be less than Rs. 250 to Rs. 300 per month. I do not know any one more suitable to fill in this post than M. Visage about whom I have already spoken to you and for whom I have solicited from you a commission. This man is very scheming, very brave and extremely zealous for the interests of the nation, very well known in the country and his capacity as a one time surgeon gives him access to the Emperor and to all the courtiers as well as in all the seraglios, a unique facility for discovering all the intrigues and weaving them.

I have also no resident with the European powers. They would be of no use there. As I myself carry on my correspondence with the people in this country; I write to them letters which are carried by trustworthy messengers who have to be paid very dearly to secure their fidelity. There is also no sum allocated for this kind of expenditure, and our auditor, a man extremely timid, even refuses them on most essential occasions. In my turn, I do not wish to demand anything by force and authority. I would always be in the wrong and would be reproached afterwards. What is the result of the strict orders for niggardly economy which are imposed upon us? It is that everything is languishing and that we are losing credit, consideration and connections everywhere.

Reply to item No. 12

I do not know French parties spread in Hindustan other than those of Madec, now in the service of the Raja of Gohad, of Sombre, in the service of Najaf Khan, and of Lallée, in the service of Bassalat Jang.

That of Madec consists of four battalions of sipahees of thousand men each, of about 100 Europeans attached to an artillery of 20 guns and 600 indigenous cavalry.

That of Sombre is larger. It is composed of eight battalions of sipahees, of 2,000 cavalry and 150 Europeans. These leaders receive emoluments more or less according to the circumstances from the Prince whom they serve, but generally they are assigned lands known as jahgirs of which the revenue takes the place of the salary for them. Madec had one of Rs. 60,000 per month. He could not preserve it since the defeat he suffered in an encounter which took place between him and the Ruhelas and in which he lost his guns and his baggage. He has recovered his losses since then and begins to get a good footing.

Sombre has a jahgir of Rs. 1,00,000 per month. He manages his affairs with much intelligence, wisdom and circumspection. He is considered to possess a fortune of more than 60 lakhs in cash. I have done my best to attach him to the interests of the nation. But he has no confidence in any one, and as the English have placed a price on his head, he is always afraid that traps may be set for him. However, I am quite confident that if he could be given guarantees, he would be willing to serve the nation with all his might, and we could rest assured that then he, as well as Madec, would be ready to march, each one with his party, anywhere they would be ordered to do so. With promises of honours and rewards, they would make sacrifices, and if their succour was needed in the province of Tatta, they could be persuaded to proceed to the place when our troops arrive there. I can answer for Madec. I cannot assure the same thing about Sombre with whom I could never correspond, since he did not wish to reply to my letters. Perhaps a commission of a Captain would make him more tractable, especially if he were guaranteed all protection against the English. All these detachments are not at all acknowledged by the nation, and that is wrong. If they were, they would be dependent. Whereas in their present state of existence, they obey no one and have their own way. The authorities wanted to avoid giving umbrage to the English by not acknowledging these parties. But this

is wrong politics which is absolutely harmful to us. We ought to furnish them and send them all the help they need in arms and ammunition, for which they will pay, and it would not be a difficult thing.

To know exactly the dispositions of Sombre, I must send a confidential person on your behalf and mine, entrusted with your letters. You could promise him all that would tend to flatter him and urge him to serve his prince to the best of his ability. But for such a mission, we must be ready to sacrifice about a thousand rupees. Without money and without lot of expense, it is impossible to do anything in the whole country. But unfortunately it is a truth of which we are unable to convince the Government. Besides, perhaps, Sir, you have powers on this subject wider than M. Law had, and in that case it is for you to use them. I am, perhaps more than anyone else, in favour of economy, but in what ought this economy to consist? It is in fulfilling an object, judged necessary for the good and the advantage of the nation with the minimum possible expense and not in suppressing this very object and destroying everything for fear of being obliged to support it. Any government or administration necessarily entails inevitable expenses with it, and if they are objected to, then the machine crumbles and ceases to exist.

Up till now I have not sent the general amnesty granted to all the French deserters, either in the parties spread in Hindustan or with the European nations, since no copy of the same has been sent to me. Today that I have received several, I shall use them as you indicate to me. I do not think that it will produce great effect. These deserters, accustomed to a life of ease, sloth and independence, will certainly not avail of it to start again a painful life and that of subordination, otherwise they would never be but bad soldiers. It is better to allow them to stay in the different parties to which they are attached, and we shall be sure to find them at the right occasion and we can get service from these troops if ever we undertake some enterprise.

Reply to item No. 13

I find, Sir, from your statement in this item, that you are neither apprised of the composition of our garrison at Chandernagore, nor of the precarious footing on which it exists. I shall supply you all the necessary information on this point.

1. We have no right to maintain a garrison here. That is expressly forbidden us by the treaty of Paris. The same is the case with regard to

fortifications and guns. But at the time of the re-establishment, M. Law, after representations made to the English Council and to Clive on the necessity of keeping some force for the maintenance of order and security and to prevent disorders in the colony, obtained permission to keep 200 sipahees and 25 Europeans with two officers only. The said Council, however, reserved to itself the right to withdraw this indulgence whenever it would deem fit to do so, so that at the first fancy it will take, it can send me the order to dismiss all these men and I shall have no other decision to take but to obey it. You can thus imagine to what tactful behaviour this condition subjects me in all disputes which are raised against me. Often the men of the Fouzdar of Hoogly come and commit outrages and beat our inhabitants and yet I dare not send sipahees to fill them with awe. The English would take cognizance of it to tell me that since I use my sipahees, which are granted to us, against men under their administration, they want me to dismiss them. I must therefore suffer everything, and that is really the role which I am obliged to pay. You can thus imagine the amount of patience I must possess, what prudence and moderation I must employ, and at the same time how much I have to suffer from such revolting slavery.

At the present moment, we have only one officer who is M. le Chevalier de la Saussaye. He has sent you by my order the list of our garrison consisting of 150 sipahees and of four to five Europeans. The second officer who helped him in his duties died last year and has not been replaced. Today it would be necessary to have another, as it is not possible for M. la Saussaye to attend alone either to all the details or to the good order of all the gates placed at intervals, at a considerable distance from each other, since it is a question of guarding with 150 men a stretch of more than 16 kms. in circumference, in addition to the interior which requires bodies of guards always ready to proceed anywhere where there are disturbances and disputes. You will find from this description how difficult service is and how it must be suffering. Thus there is no security in our colony; every day is marked by thefts and assassinations; fires are started purposely by evil-minded people. All this ought to impress upon you the necessity to complete the 200 men and the 25 Europeans granted by the English. With this increase, the guarding will improve, and consequently, there will be less disorder. This account saves me the trouble of sending you the list of names of the officers, for which you have asked, and of giving you an account of their talents and their character

I can speak to you only of M. Le Chevalier de la Saussaye. There are few as active, as zealous, as just and as unselfish. Therefore, since he has taken over this command, I have not heard that a single sipahee has deserted : proof that he is just, that he is loved by them and everyone is happy with him. Consequently, it costs him his money. He receives only Rs. 80 per month which is just sufficient to pay for the rent of his house and his palanquin. He keeps discipline as well as he can, as he is alone looking after it and also as much as the temperament of the sipahees can admit of it, and I am not aware of any violation of any consequence either among them or in the service. Only they are on the whole not properly drilled. Firstly, because, since they are always on duty, it is impossible to drill them often; secondly, in order not to arouse the jealousy of the English, we have not ventured to give them musketry drill. We are obliged to use our discretion and caution to this point, and they are very certainly of good position, considering the character of the people with whom we have to deal. It is this awkward situation which had urged me to propose to M. Law a plan concerning the garrison here. You can ask for it from him, Sir. He will communicate it to you, as also all that I have written to him on the subject of the military personnel here. You can make your comments thereon and I shall scrupulously follow the orders which you will be pleased to give me. It is certain that since this garrison exists only by the indulgence of the English, it must be considered as unacknowledged by our government to whose dignity it would be a very great insult the moment it pleases the English to dismiss it. That would be all the more mortifying since we would not be able to complain about it, because the treaty of Paris conforms with it. These are the reasons, Sir, which had urged me to propose to M. Law to transform this garrison into a troop in some secret manner which would have no relation with the other troops in India, and would form a small separate corps of which an account would be rendered to him alone; it could have been given a special uniform, and I think that this would be the only course to follow as most consistent with the treaty of peace, and perhaps the most acceptable to the Minister for the reason which I have just explained and the difficulties which we have to face.

Reply to item No. 14

The King's revenue is not open to any improvement in Bengal. But there is a fear that before long they may considerably diminish in view

of the continual depopulation of our colony, which is felt more and more, as a result of the apprehension and the tyranny which crush us. We have twenty masters to serve and all moved by the idea to ruin us. The English are at the head, next comes the fouzdar who, in the capacity of their very humble servant and valet, only follows their will. The main function of his post is to do us as much harm as he can. Next come the vast crowd of all the petty zamindars, sovereign proprietors or farmers of a multitude of small plots of land, who, although enclaved by our colony, do not belong to us and are not even subject to our jurisdiction. Those of our inhabitants who misbehave or commit crimes, retire to their protection. It is a freedom with which we are not allowed to interfere. Above everything, we have to face the Nawab of Murshidabad and his naib or deputy Muhammad Reza Khan. They are reserved for major affairs in which the English dare not show their name and when it is a question of employing some great violence against us or against our privileges or introducing innovations harmful to our interests.

The revenues of Bengal, I think, consist in approximately Rs. 24,000 out of which we pay in our turn twelve to thirteen thousand as rent for lands which we have possessed since very old times and which we must preserve in order not to lose our rights of jurisdiction. Thus, in all Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 11,000 net are left, and the farming lease which we have recently renewed would have diminished this year, in proportion to the depopulation of the colony, if the tenant-farmer, through vain glory, had not consented to continue his lease. I am quite sure that if it had been put for public auction, it would have brought more than four to five thousand less. Besides, I do not know a sure person in a position to answer among the natives, other than the present tenant-farmer; he is also most capable among them of managing it well and satisfying the inhabitants.

Reply to item No. 18

As the ship Le Brillant can remain only for a year in India, Sir, I do not find any other mission for it than that which you have given it on the Malabar Coast, where it is reported, it has proceeded accompanied by La Consolante. A very good effect is bound to result from thus displaying the King's flag especially in a region at present full of troubles and where we have received repeated affronts. We would have to take vengeance for the ship Le Doyard carried away or destroyed by the

Angrés and for the insult they have offered to the King's ship La Seine. I shall not speak to you about the happenings under M. Duprat. You must have certainly already given your opinion thereon.

A reflexion which I have already often submitted to the Minister and which you cannot too often repeat to him for the safety of the nation. It is the necessity to keep a squadron in India, as strong at least as that of the English, so as to be prepared like them on the sea in case of rupture in Europe. We have no port in India, at least it is so asserted, and that is the reason offered for not keeping ships in this country. But then do we not know that we have the King's Island in proprietorship on the eastern coast opposite Pondicherry? Why has it been neglected all these years and why have we not set there an establishment which, in relation to this country, would be much more precious and much more important to us than the Isle of France? What have I not said and written about it? But it is a matter of expenditure and as soon as you harp on this string, they stop listening to you. The King's Island offers a port which is the safest, the finest and the most spacious in India. The entrance to it is very difficult for any enemy, if we had established ourselves there. It can hold more than 100 warships and others sheltered from all winds. Situated at a distance of 20 kms. from the mainland, within reach of Siam, Pegu, Nicobars, Ceylon, we can obtain from all these places fresh provisions of all kinds. In order to ascertain for yourself more about my assertions, you could send there Le Brillant in the month of October for wintering. If you decide to keep it there, it will draw up the plan of this island and explore all its advantages. As it is not inhabitated, it will not find provisions there. But if the war between Pegu and Siam ceases, it will not lack them at Mergui. I have been to this place and have stayed there for two months and I speak about it with full knowledge. Fish is very abundant and excellent there. I have not the time to go on this occasion into the detail of all the advantages which the nation would derive from this place. It is a matter which I shall discuss fully later on.

Reply to item No. 19

Since, in this query, Sir, you have the kindness and the modesty to consult me on the conduct you should follow with regard to European as well as native individuals, I think that you must take up a firm attitude with them, when they would attempt to infringe and aim a blow at all the just rights of the nation. If, as I see with grief, your forces do not permit you

to repel the insults and the outrages which could be inflicted on us, the channel of representations and then of protest is the only one left open to you. And then it will be for our Government to apply the remedies and take measures which it will deem proper. Thereby, you will be in no way to blame, and it is the only satisfaction I feel in the intolerable position I am occupying, and in the midst of all the unpleasant occurrences and mortifications it has brought on me. If your means were ample, Sir, and if, in furnishing them to you, the intention of our Government was that you should use them, I would soon open before you a vast field, but unfortunately, we have not come to that, and to the present moment, it is only too clear that the moment of our deliverance is not yet at hand, and that we are still for a long time condemned to captivity which humiliates us as much as it enchains us. It is Bengal, Sir, that you must visit to be a painful witness of this situation, and in fact, in whatever manner may turn out this voyage, I do not see how you can avoid it. Your capacity as the King's Commissioner and the powers which it bestows on you to negotiate national affairs, for the past as well as for the present and the future, seems to necessitate it. Otherwise, how can you, Sir, demand reparation and compensation for all the innumerable mischiefs and the wrongs, the outrages and the insults which we have suffered here? The English, I know it, would not be gratified if you happened to touch this subject which, as well as the horror of their conduct, would expose them publicly. They would also do their utmost to parry the thrust. But on the other hand, how can they defend their conduct when, in virtue of your powers, you will ask them for discussions, when you will lay before them facts accompanied with most convincing and most authentic proofs, when you demand from them compensation for that, when you will insist on the fact that they should restore to us the enjoyment of our privileges and our rights, as they are contained in our firmans and paravanas, and even in the terms of the last treaty of Paris? They must indeed give a reply, and as in this reply they will never deviate from their principles which are to encroach upon everything and submit everything to their will. You will at least have the satisfaction to hear it from their own mouth and in their letters which they will write to you, and it will be an irrevocable confirmation of all the facts which I have ceaselessly pointed out in all my correspondence and which can even indeed rouse our Government to its interests, and to the necessity to support them, or else finally, it should take the decision to abandon

everything, which suits much better its dignity than to remain in this country on conditions in which we exist there, having as our share only humiliations, contempt and degradation which are the result of its policy. Rest assured, Sir, that if you come here, we will put them in the wrong for which they have no excuse at all, or else they would be obliged to grant you at least a part of your just demands which you will address to them. This plan, which I offer you here, as perhaps, in my opinion, the most important part of your mission, is one which can do you the greatest honour and which is most likely to give celebrity to your administration, and with the aid of heaven, we shall handle things well. Experienced like them in knowledge, in their politics, their principles and their maxims, it will be difficult for them to put us off. As usual, they will have recourse to their sophisms and to their specious dodges. That's the net at which, I expect, they will grasp. But I repeat to you once again, Sir, you must appear with ostentation and all the pomp you can bring.

This is, Sir, all that I can hurriedly write to you at the present moment in reply to several items contained in your queries and questions. Time does not permit me to expatiate more, and I defer replying to this subject-matter tc discuss it at length later on. Unfortunately, I shall not have for a long time an occasion to write to you and send you my letters. The season is at an end and soon the winds will no longer permit the ships to sail out of the Ganges. The land-route is not safe, and important affairs cannot be handled through it.

I have the honour to be most respectfully

Sir

Your very humble and very obedient servant

CHEVALIER

C² 156, f. 145-155 v° Chandernagore, 15th December 1777

My Lord de Sartine,
Minister and Secretary of State,
at Court.
Political Affairs

My Lord,

Here is very interesting news which I have just received from different parts of Hindustan. The war-flames are lighted on all sides. And there

is every likelihood that so many events can henceforth be terminated only by a complete revolution. But in whose favour will it turn? That is not difficult to conjecture. The English are secretly playing a major role therein, and certainly their intrigues, supported by their power, will turn the scale in favour of the side to which their interests guide them.

Najaf Khan, General of the Emperor, has recently won a complete victory over Zabita Khan, the most powerful chief of the clan of the Ruhela Pathans, who was stormed in his stronghold, although protected by the guns of his post, known as Ghausgarh. There followed a treaty of peace which cost him huge sums which enabled Najaf Khan to pay his troops and increase their number. But the English, having become jealous of these successes, intrigued with Zabita Khan to urge him to take his revenge. For this purpose, they promised him protection, won over two leading officers of Najaf Khan's army, who promised to turn against him in the thick of the battle. The plan thus formed, Zabita Khan, counting on this treachery, fell with all his forces on Najaf Khan. But the latter, who had been warned, was on his guard and had taken the precaution to remove the two traitors, on the previous evening, so that Zabita Khan was repulsed after a most stubborn fight which lasted three hours. His troops, after suffering a frightful carnage, took to flight and retired into their post, but they were pressed so hard that they entered it pell-mell. It is reported that the Ruhelas lost 6,000 men on this day. Zabita Khan's son and his two uncles, who were his ministers, were made prisoners as well as all the rest of his family. And as for him, he had no other alternative but to flee into the territory of the Sikhs who had furnished him a corps of 6,000 cavalry which shared his defeat.

Thus, by this event the famous clan of the Ruhelas is almost destroyed. Najaf Khan, master of its territory, is occupied in establishing his authority and daily raises from it large sums. After pacifying everything, he proposes to attack and punish the Jats who were hostile to him during his expedition against the Ruhelas. His goal is next to seize Etah and the whole province of Kora. But as it borders on the territory of Mirza Many [34], son of Shuja-ud-daulah, he is afraid the English may oppose it with their forces. On the other hand, this same Mirza Many, crushed by the yoke under which the English make him groan, is only seeking the occasion to shake it off. But as they know his feelings, they have deprived him of the means to do so by not leaving any troops with him, so that

he is almost reduced to play a role as sad as that of the Nawab of Bengal. It is to his advantage that Najaf Khan should succeed in his projects, but how can we think of it so long as he is not supported by a European corps and has only his own forces to oppose to those of the English? They are, however, very large since they cônsist in 80,000 soldiers among whom can be counted more than 6,000 sipahees, armed and disciplined on the European model. He also possesses a fairly good artillery and a numerous cavalry. All that enables him to achieve great things against the people of the country, but not to resist the English, if they attack him. Besides this army, he also maintains another one, composed of about 25,000 men, in cavalry as well as in infantry in the neighbourhood of Agra.

This Najaf Khan is a very great genius, my Lord, and his conduct for many years past indicates in him the qualities of a hero. Always short of money, he finds the means, by the affection and respect which he has been able to inspire for his person, to control his troops and urge them to fight without receiving their salary. It's a rare example to be cited among these people. He combines vast knowledge, soundest politics and most intrepid bravery. I am in correspondence with him and I know his sentiments, but our sad situation and the fact that we can offer few resources to him, as well as to the Emperor, hold him in distrust and prevent him from joining us. He is nevertheless a man on whom the nation can count if ever it turns its powerful views on Hindustan. He would receive us with open arms. He is aware that he cannot do without a corps of Europeans, if he has to shake off the dread which the English inspire in him, and that it is the only means he has to undertake the conquests which he has planned and restore to his master a degree of power and consideration which his misfortunes have led him to lose for a long time. He considers the cause he defends as being common with ours, and the more he is convinced of this truth, the more he is astonished at our apathy which he attributes to an insuperable incapacity. It is very certain, my Lord, that so long as we shall have mere words to stake with and distant hopes to give, they will not show any confidence in them. All the princes who, out of interest or spirit of vengeance, are inclined to declare themselves in our favour, will not dare to do so as long as they will not be assured of finding in us a protection which would screen them from all danger. Let us appear on a respectable footing,

let a body of 4,000 to 5,000 men land to inspire the drooping courage of the peoples, then you will see them all vie with each other in lining up under our flag. I even do not exclude from them the so-called friends or allies of the English; fear alone keeps them on their side, but the harsh and shameful bondage in which they are kept subjugated leaves only feelings of hatred and vengeance in their heart and they are only waiting for the occasion to give vent to them. But so long as we remain inactive, they will also remain so. They cannot have any confidence in their own forces; they know that by themselves they are not capable of resisting those of the English and that it would be a folly on their part to try it if they are not supported by us.

In my previous letters, I had the honour to inform you, my Lord, that the Council of Bombay, after granting its protection to the traitor Raghoba, assassin of the royal family of the Marathas, had furnished him succours to march on Poona, the capital, but that the Supreme Council of Calcutta, fearing the consequences of this war, had stopped it from the outset. It was severely censured by the letters of the Company which arrived by the latest ships. Its conduct was taxed with timidity and ignorance in political matters in that it failed to profit by such a fine opportunity to humble the Maratha power, the only one redoubtable and capable of thwarting and stopping the execution of the vast projects which this nation has been forming since long to seize the whole Empire. Finally, it has orders to renew this offer and spare nothing so that it achieves the desired success. Consequently, the Council of Calcutta has recently dispatched several agents, among them, one to Manoji, son and successor of Janoji, who occupies the province of Berar and that of Cuttock in which is situated Balasore. He is one of the most powerful Maratha chiefs, as much by his own forces as by his riches and who, besides, has rights to assert on the throne of Poona. It is through this bait that the English will tempt him to induce him to enter into the alliance which is proposed to be formed. Another agent has proceeded to the residence of Shinde, another Maratha prince who governs the province of Malwa, near Ajmer. Finally, it is Raghoba himself who is the moving spirit of these great designs. When all is well prepared and consolidated, each of the allies will join forces and order them to march on Poona. It does not matter to the English which of the two parties prevails; their goal is to see that the Maratha nation is

destroyed by its own hands through battles as also through divisions which they will foment. Then, the party which will remain superior to the other being too weak to resist them, they will fall on it and crush it.

Colonel Upton, the same person who was already dispatched to Poona and who was detained at that place as a prisoner, is returning there. His mission is, under the pretext of entering into a treaty with the Peshwa or the great Prince of the Marathas, to cleverly win over individuals in the town and the Darbar, to arrange for secret communications there and thus prepare in advance the conflagration which must envelope the whole territory.[35] All this intrigue could not be handled with sufficient secrecy so as not be detected. Two Maratha chiefs, one by name Raghunathrao and other Baburao, of whom the former possesses the Kingdom of Jhansi and the other that of Gwalior, got wind of it and wrote to me to urge M. Bellecombe to form an alliance with the Court of Poona which, they add, intends to ally itself with us and ask us for a body of troops and a train of artillery. I granted their wishes by communicating them to M. de Bellecombe, but what can he do in this circumstance, without money, troops and all sorts of resources? What is certain, is that nothing could be more advantageous than such an alliance if we had forces to support it. The interests of the Marathas once bound with ours, we become invincible and capable of fulfilling for our benefits the vast projects which the English have been forming for their own advantage and for which they are slowly clearing the road.

Our political schemes suffer from the inertia of our situation and our difficulties. Always led by views of a niggardly and mistaken economy, we do not know how to spend opportunely. We are even afraid of making the smallest presents because they cost money. Whereas it is only by open-handedness and even a kind of prodigality properly combined that one can think of succeeding. Venality and corruption are the life and soul of all the courts of the Asiatic princes. This principle, which is unquestionable, once it is known, why do we not employ it and derive advantage for us therefrom? It is the road which was followed and is being constantly followed by the English; it is also that which has contributed and is contributing most to their success. Is it not a shame, and I have occasion to blush at it every day, that I have not here a single farthing at my disposal for the negotiations and the

presents with which they have to be accompanied? Is it then imagined that it is out of love for the French name alone and without any return of benefit that people ought to love us, be attached to us and help us? The Mughal princes and the Rajas with whom I am in correspondence often address to me requests for some curio articles from Europe, and I cannot send them anything since I am not furnished with anything, and because the authorities don't send me anything towards this end. Neither the Emperor, nor his Court, nor Najaf Khan has yet received the smallest present from us. Lastly, I am forced to dispute every day with the deputy auditor to get him even to pay the men who carry my letters, and it is only after thousand difficulties and unpleasant negotiations that he gives in by continually pointing out to me the miserable state of the treasury. These are the resources at my disposal and with which I am expected to work miracles. I have written to M. Bellecombe about it, but his embarrassment is the same as mine. As his only reply, he sympathises with me, himself complains and his heart is embittered with all that he sees, and with the total neglect in which is left a country which by its importance ought today to be considered as one of the principal objects of our policy. The more the English entertain this idea for themselves, the more also it is a reason for us to think like them, and act in our turn as they do in theirs. If we do not change our maxims, it will cost us dearly, they will in the end become absolute masters of the Empire, will expel us from it and will remain peaceful possessors of it. This is what I have been indicating since long, but since the authorities no longer believe in prophecies, mine are treated as visions, and unfortunately we are perhaps very near to the period when I shall see myself avenged for my incredulity.

In the present circumstances, more than ever, it would be absolutely necessary that I should send Waquils or Residents to the Emperor and to Najaf Khan. They desire it and have indicated it to me, because through this channel they could communicate to me their intentions without compromising themselves. But where are the funds to pay them and furnish for their maintenance which is necessary in a country like this one in order to win credit and consideration? They cannot be paid less than Rs. 500 per month without counting the expenses of the presents. It would be necessary for me also to have a Waquil with Manoji to dissuade him from entering into the alliance which the English are

proposing to him and with Taimur Shah, son and successor of Abdali, whose domains adjoin the province of Tatta, to maintain friendship with him. But once again, where are the funds to meet so many expenses which are, however, absolutely necessary for the success and prosperity of our affairs? If the authorities wish to persist in considering India as a country which is not of any importance for us, why preserve costly establishments and maintain garrisons there? It is better to recall all and abandon everything by leaving only simple consulates at Calcutta and at Madras for the French ships which would arrive there. If, on the contrary, as sound politics dictates it, the authorities attach to India all the great importance which it deserves and if they realise of what consequence it is to prevent it from falling into the hands of the English, then it is indeed indispensable to adopt the plans which are conducive to it and begin promptly their execution by employing in it the means necessary to achieve success. We know the dangers with which we are threatened and we are doing nothing to prevent them. Similarly, the road to prosperity, to power and to greatness is open to us, and we fear to enter it. If from the outset the authorities had listened to me, we would have long back played a role worthy of the French name in this country, and it is because they did not listen that we continue to crawl in this state of humiliation which will cast a slur on the nation.

I recently addressed a letter to Emperor Taimur Shah, but as the letter was not accompanied by any present, and as he is in a state of greatness which does not permit him, like that of Delhi, to wave certain etiquettes of his court, I am not sure whether it was delivered to him. He possesses a very large kingdom on the confines of Persia which his father Abdali formed by his conquests, partly from Persia and partly from the Mughal Empire. It adjoins, as I have mentioned it above, the province of Tatta. As a measure of precaution, he is a prince whom it is important for us to treat with consideration. The report goes that he is preparing to invade the territory of the Sikhs at the head of a formidable army, at the request of the Mughal Emperor, his uncle, who considers this diversion necessary to his interests to prevent them from taking vengeance for the defeat they have suffered in the war of Zabita Khan. But this nation is very powerful and capable of resisting him. They possess the province of Lahore and share with him a part of Multan. They form among themselves a republic nearly on the same lines as that of the

Swiss cantons and have in common with that of Holland a kind of stadholder who is its head called Maugouron or Pape boeuf. He is a spiritual and temporal Prince. The government usually maintains an army of 1,00,000 men of cavalry who receive as pay only lands which they cultivate and which are exempt from taxes. Besides they get all the plunder which they can collect from the enemy's country with the exception of a fixed portion which reverts to the republic; this, in imitation of the Marathas, encourages them to devastate everything. They are armed with arrows and arquebuses, their horses are very light and they fight in a manner very much akin to the ancient Parthians. When there is a question of a national war, all the cantons unite and each furnishes his contingent which increases in equal number the troops maintained by the body of the nation, and to command the whole, they elect a chief or a kind of dictator who holds his post only during the duration of the war for which he has been elected. Every canton is governed by a Prince or a chief who specially maintains a body of troops and who often carries on war on his own account without the rest of the nation taking part in it. All these Princes or individual chiefs as well as the head chief Maugouron are kinds of priests of the sect called Gosain. They do not marry but buy children or adopt them and it is they who succeed them. Although these people are pagans, yet their religion is not as overloaded with superstitions or ceremonies as that of other peoples of Hindustan. They make use of spiritual liquors and eat almost anything with the exception of the cow which they honour like the rest of the pagans.

If Taimur Shah attacks their territory, the result will be a diversion advantageous for the Mughal Emperor. While these two powers will wage war, he will have the opportunity to extend the conquests begun by Najaf Khan. But on the other hand, the vigilant English will soon be in conflict with him and seek the means to prevent him from expanding his influence, and if they can succeed in giving the Marathas occupation in their own country, then all these wars and private divisions can only turn to their advantage and favour their interests. They will have no other role to play than that of incendiaries by rekindling the fire every where, where they will see it about to be extinguished, and for this purpose it will suffice them to give succour and protection to the weakest against the strongest to turn the scale on the side which will suits them. At this moment, they have the finest prospect before them and they can turn the

circumstances to account if they are not prevented from it by some event in Europe. In the midst of great hopes on which they feed, it is the only fear they have. However, it must be admitted that it would be very easy for us to frustrate all their projects if we had four to five thousand men with the Emperor. It is then that the balance would be in our hands, and that they would be forced to think of nothing but their own preservation. But unfortunately, we havn't come to that. Therefore, we can rest assured that before long the whole Mughal Empire will fall to them as their share.

The latest news, which they have recently received from Europe overland, has not leaked out, but it appears to be causing anxiety. It is easy to judge of it by their movements. All their European troops and their artillery, which were billeted inland have just been recalled and lodged in the fort of Calcutta, leaving the frontiers to be guarded only by brigades of sipahees, and even these are composed of new recruits; a very large number of them has been recruited very recently. So long as the English have some cause to fear that a war may be declared and that they may be attacked, the execution of their projects in the Indian empire will be slowed down, and if we had money at our disposal to give incentive and effectiveness to our negotiations, it would be possible to profit by this moment to break the famous league in question and of which I have spoken. It will be very formidable for their enemies and very favourable for them if it takes place. As for me, I have been hoping for a very long time that the party of Lallée which is in the service of Bassalat Jang were with the Emperor or Najaf Khan who would receive it with great joy. It would considerably reinforce him if it is composed, as it is said, of 400 Europeans. My maxim is that it is more advisable to be attached to the trunk than to the branches. When you hold the trunk, you are master of the whole tree. Consequently it is in the direction of the Emperor, however weak he may be, that we ought to betake ourselves. It matters very little to us whether he has qualities of a hero. Once we are stationed with him, we need only his name to act. His very weakness would be advantageous to us in that it would assure us that he would allow himself to be entirely guided by the movements of prompting which we would give him. That is the policy which the English have followed by placing only similar heads in all the territories which they have conquered. There is no doubt about it; that is what has contributed most to their greatness in establishing their power and their authority.

My Lord, I would want you to call me to your presence; I would utilize the Suez route; it would be a voyage of not more than four months for me to proceed (to France) and as much time to return. But in a single interview, I would have the satisfaction of unfolding to you things with greater detail and clarity than it is possible to do so perhaps in ten years of correspondence. Letters have never the same force as verbal explanations. They always leave doubts and difficulties which block the way, but all those which could be urged against the execution of the plans which I have proposed, would soon be raised in a manner which would neither admit answer nor objection if I could have the honour of discussing them in your presence. That is where I would like to keep in the docks these persons who have only seen the streets of Chandernagore or Pondicherry and have picked up their visions and dared to prepare from them memorials which only embarrass the Minister by obscuring evidence and truth, after reducing them to silence. I shall derive from it the glory of dispelling all the clouds to reveal only the light in all its clarity, and they would have finally to admit the soundness of my projects as also of the certain results which I have announced. They point out the correct route to be followed and that is the only one capable of finally re-establishing the nation in the enjoyment of its rights and of restoring to it in this part of the world the degree of greatness and power from which its past misfortunes have caused it to fall.

I am most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

CHEVALIER

C² 156, f. 19-20 v°. Chandernagore, 18th February 1778

My Lord de Sartine,
Minister and Secretary of State.

Political Affairs

My Lord,

My heart bleeds at all the events that I witness. The moment of our ruin and of our expulsion from India is approaching everyday, and nothing

in the world can save us from it if the projects you had of saving the Mughal Empire by preventing it from falling into the hands of the English, have suffered some delay in their execution. Here is war declared openly at Bombay and Surat between them and the Marathas. It is even reported that the hostilities have begun. It's the most major and the most important event that could happen on the political scene, since the fate of India is indispensably bound up with it. If the Marathas succumb, the result will bring about the total ruin of their nation, and then there no longer remains any power which can either balance that of the English or oppose the execution of their vast projects and their ambitious designs. Consequently, all the provinces will pass under the yoke, the Emperor himself becomes the slave and the sport of their will. They will use his name in the beginning to expel the European nations or at least ours. It will be a matter of a firman which they will force him to sign and by which we shall be notified that as the reasons which had urged his predecessors to grant us establishments and privileges no longer exist and as, on the contrary, he finds that it is in his interest and that of the people that we should no longer remain in his dominions, he enjoins us to quit them and in case of refusal, reserving the right to force us to do so. What shall we urge against this language? Where are our forces which can support us against all those of the Emperor who will be at the disposal of the English and whom they will order to march under the imposing name of the Prince whom they will have made their puppet ? Will the authorities then think of preparing powerful armaments in France? But what success could be expected from them and what could they achieve? There will not even be left to them a single spot where they can effect a landing in a country in which everyone will be hostile; and if the troops land, they will only be hard pressed by a vast cavalry which will force them to perish with fatigue and starvation. What is more is that without resources and means, they will soon lack money, while the enemy, master of the treasures and of the revenues of the Empire, will have everything in abundance. This is, my Lord, the evil moment which threatens us and which is already hanging over our head, and it becomes inevitable and irremediable, if we do not promptly receive forces and orders to act. But if the star of France ordained that they should appear in a circumstance like this, this war between the Marathas and the English would be the most favourable event which heaven could have prepared for it. United with them, we would save their power and would bind them to us forever by such

signal service, and just as we would become the instruments of their salvation, so also they would reciprocally become those of our grandeur, of our power and of the destruction of our enemies. Whilst we shall thus co-operate in conjunction with this nation, we shall none the less execute the plan formed, and this affair would not prevent us from answering the wishes of the Emperor who will more than ever need our succour in a situation as delicate and as frightening for himself, for, he knows very well that the Marathas, although they plunder his provinces when they have an occasion for it, are none the less the only bulwark against the English power, and that once this bulwark is destroyed, he is the first to become the slave and that it is from his hands that he will have the grief and the despair to see the throne of Tairmurlang and all the grandeur of his House perish. Our misfortunes and the power of the English are the result of the fact that not being very far-sighted, we completely neglected the Indian theatre of which the authorities never knew or never wished to know the great interests; that the position would be different, if, since the re-establishment, they had occupied themselves with the means to make amends for the past by being prepared to profit by all the occasions likely to lead to a goal so glorious, so useful and even so necessary for the politics of Europe.

I am respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

CHEVALIER

M. de Lalee

French Adventurer in India

1773 — 1790

and

M. de Montigny

French Envoy at the Mughal Court—1778-1779

and later at the Maratha Court—1779

C^2 141 f. 3-4

De Lallée's letter to M. Baudouin *

Adoni, August 15, 1774

Sir,

Since the ioss of India (to the French) a unit consisting of a few unfortunate Frenchmen was left behind in this countıy, first under the command of M. *Zéphire* or Babel (his family name), who did his level best to profess his allegiance to the throne by offering his life and his services to the cause of the nation in case they were needed.

He declared his intentions and was given some promises. This worthy man in the end died without the consolation of receiving any news about his offer of services. He was succeeded by M. Gardez, but the latter, because of his age, could no longer stand the strain of military campaigns and preferred a quiet retirement. As the senior-most officer of the Swiss Party, it fell on his shoulders to command it since October 1773. This party is in the service of Bassalat Jang, brother of Nizamali, who has as his apanage the kingdoms of Bijapur and Adoni and their dependencies. These latter constitute the rich provinces which are in the possession of the English on the Coromandel Coast and of several Indian chiefs who are supposed to be his tributaries. He is soft-natured and kind, and himself governs his kingdom with the aid of an army of which my unit forms an important section. This prince places all his confidence in this handful of Frenchmen whom he considers as the main support of his welfare. He is impatiently waiting for a declaration of war between the two nations (the French and the English) to satisfy his desire to render service to the French and secure for our establishments in India a position of advantage. My unit has been with this prince for the last nine years and he has rewarded its good services and its loyalty by conferring the title of " Nawab " on my predecessors and myself, who have actually the honour to command these remnants of brave Frenchmen whom the unfortunate times had scattered in this country. I have at the present moment under my orders 500 Europeans, 2,000 sipahis and 1,000 toapases. These troops are under the supervision of a staff which is equally noted for its prudence and bravery. It has therefore won the

* It was not advisable to give the correspondence of M. de Montigny and that of M. de Lallée separately, as a major portion of that of the latter is mixed up with that of the former.

confidence of the soldiers as well as the esteem of the prince. My attachment for his person is due not to the honours and the privileges which he has conferred on my officers and me but to the ardour which he has always shown to help my country on a suitable occasion. It is for this reason that my predecessors served him so faithfully. They as well as myself and my unit have since long wished to express to the King (of France) our readiness to shed our blood for his service. The persons whom we approached so far have disappointed us. Fortunately, I happened to make the acquaintance of M. Roussel, senior, who had kindly undertaken to convey our wishes to offer our services to our Prince. I am addressing this letter to you, Sir, with the full confidence of a good patriot, convinced that you will appreciate the services we are capable of rendering, if you grant us your protection. M. Roussel, senior, will explain to you our intentions and give you an exact account of everything that concerns us. It is through his efforts that we expect to succeed in our objective, and whatever be the circumstance, we assure you that the Swiss Party will shed its blood for the nation.

I remain very respectfully

Your very humble and obedient servant

De Lalée

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f. 5-7

Adoni, July 15, 1776

To

Monsieur Baudouin.

Sir,

I received your kind letter dated July 10, 1775 on July 8, 1776. I have no sufficient words to express my gratitude to you, Sir, for having conveyed my feelings of fidelity and attachment to His Majesty and to the Minister. The favour which His Majesty has been kind enough to bestow on me as well as on my unit is entirely due to the protection you have granted me. It is impossible for me to express my gratitude to you for it. Myself and my unit have since long wished to convey our wishes (to offer our services to our Prince). You kindly undertook to fulfil our heart's desire and you did it with such generosity which is solely the mark of

great souls. What gratitude therefore do I not owe you and what other proof can I give you of my sensibility to such a kindly act than to reiterate to you my prayer to continue to me your powerful protection? Without it my sincere desire to be of some service to my nation cannot be fulfilled. All the benefit resulting therefrom will be your achievement. Every member of my unit will be extremely grateful and ready to shed his blood for the King to the last drop. Their conduct in this respect is much more guided by their affection than by the special favours which His Majesty has been kind enough to bestow on them. I hope you would indeed recount (to His Majesty) with what respect myself and the whole Swiss Party received the mark of favour which he so graciously conferred on me. Our unerring zeal for (the King's service) will be the testimony of our fidelity and our exactness in obeying the King's orders.

I shall not spare any efforts to keep the prince, whom I have the honour to serve, steadfast in the goodwill which he has always shown for the nation. Bassalat Jang's sickness has prevented me from communicating to him the contents of your letter which concern him. As soon as he is in a position to receive visitors, I shall speak to him about it and shall apprise you of his way of thinking, which so far has appeared to me to be in consonance with yours. Since long he has been aspiring to check the arrogance of the English. The differences that have arisen among the Maratha princes and in which Nizamali has participated, have prevented the two brothers from joining their forces during this winter. The marriages of their sons and daughters will soon be concluded and they will both join the Marathas to punish Haiderali who treacherously attacked Bassalat Jang at the commencement of this year. He seized his entire camp. I also lost mine therein and all that I could do was to escape with my troops to Adoni, a town eighty kilometres from the battlefield. This sudden attack on Bassalat Jang and his territory, far from reflecting any honour on him (Haider Ali) will set against him all the Mughal and the Maratha princes. Thus these princes will undertake the next campaign to invade his kingdom. It is in the interest of these two powers to unite against this usurper, who, in defiance of all sacred tenets, violated the most solemn treaties to gratify his ambition. He is elated by his successes and respects neither law nor religion. Nizamali and Bassalat Jang particularly want to force him to keep himself within his limits. As soon as this campaign is over, they will demand the (customary)

tribute from Muhammad Ali. That will be the favourable occasion, Sir, for the French to have the rights, seized by the English in the last war, restored to them. Nizamali and Bassalat Jang, who sincerely desire to preserve the friendship with France, will willingly lend their support in this task. My prince, on his own account, intends to address a letter to you as well as to the Minister on this subject. He would have already done it if he were convinced that his letter would be favourably received. Now that you are showing interest in his affairs, rest assured that he will spare nothing to prove to you how he feels flattered by your generous offers. Since Nizamali disposed of his minister, who was an instrument of the English, he is not at all inclined to favour them. He is meditating revenge for his defeat on the Coromandel Coast, when he descended upon that region along with Haider Ali. Bassalat Jang has never been their supporter. He has always been a friend of the French. The Marathas of Poona envy their progress and are waiting for an opportunity to take revenge for the help they have given to the Maratha Chief (Raghoba) who wanted to seize power by most illegitimate means. From the present dispositions of these Darbars, it is easy to judge that they will not support the English. However, since they have just been attacked by Haider Ali, they cannot help leading their forces against him to reduce him once again to obedience. The proximity of these two armies will compel the English to stand on their guard and prevent them from undertaking any action against the colony of Pondicherry, thus securing for the latter at least the opportunity to re-establish its influence.

Since twelve years that the Swiss Party has been in the service of Bassalat Jang, the latter has borne a malice to the English. They are, fully aware of this fact and have therefore done their best to destroy his power. If my party has supported itself so far by its own efforts, what can it not achieve, since you look kindly upon it. The favours you have just bestowed on it, serve me as a guarantee for the future and I am only waiting for the opportunity to serve you faithfully and convince you increasingly of my loyal devotion.

Sir

Your very humble and very obedient servant

LALLEE

f. 9-9 v°

To Adoni, July 30, 1777

M. de Sartine

My Lord,

Last year I had the honour to address you a letter which the Nawab Bassalat Jang had entrusted to me. He has just delivered to me another letter by which he reiterates to Your Lordship his sentiments of friendship for the French nation. He ardently desires that His Majesty should reciprocate his friendly feelings. He hopes that you will be kind enough to convey to the King his good intentions and that he will receive a favourable reply through your intermediary, my Lord. The orders, which this prince has enjoined upon me to forward this letter to you, are all the more gratifying to me, because they furnish me an occasion to renew to Your Lordship my feelings of respect and gratitude.

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

DEMOTZ DE LALLEE

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f. 11

Translation of a letter in Persian from Bassalat Jang

God alone is great.

To the very liberal, very illustrious and very glorious Nobleman, a faithful friend of his friends, God protect him !

The reputation of your inborn and acquired qualities and of your estimable character having reached us, we had formerly addressed you several letters concerning different matters and especially our friendship for the French nation; but we have so far not received any reply from you. We had represented to you that it is expedient that you should decorate the hero, about whom we had spoken to you, with the glorious

order, known in the French language as the Cross and that you should honour him with a definite reply. We repeat to you the same request, because this hero is a man of wits, an excellent officer and a zealous person who had distinguished himself on all occasions, bearing up against pain and fatigue which he had to endure in this country. This hero has won all the hearts and enjoys a general and well-merited esteem. For the rest, the reports of this valiant M. de Lallée would furnish you more detailed information about the happenings in this part of the world. What purpose would be served by longer details?

Translated under the orders of His Lordship by me, Interpreter-Secretary to the King for Oriental Languages.

Paris, June 25, 1778 RUFFIN

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f. 13-15

From my camp under Pangal

July 16, 1779

To

M. Beaudouin,

Sir,

I had the honour to address you a letter on August 10, 1778, in duplicate, which I sent you through the Dutch and the Portuguese agency. By these two letters I communicated to you the movements of the English concerning the siege of Pondicherry of which they took possession by capitulation in October of the same year. After this expedition, they used all possible efforts with Bassalat Jang to force him to discharge my services. This prince, in spite of himself, was obliged to do so in January 1779. I had informed you of this event by a letter which I sent *via* Goa. I hope you have received them. By the last one I apprised you that I had opened negotiations with the Marathas at Poona for being enlisted in their service. The great victory they had won over the English, who wanted to put Raghunatrao on the throne, had elated them. They replied that they could engage my services only after the rains. I then used such powerful influences with several noblemen at the Court of Nizamali in my favour that this prince consented to give me a moderate salary. I

accepted the offer in order to avoid the dispersal of a party which, I think, could one day be of some service to the nation, especially if employed in the service of Nizamali. This Prince, for some time past, appears to have a great grudge against the English. The latter have sent three agents who are at his court for the last two months. They have instructions to demand from this Prince a succour of 25,000 cavalry to oppose the designs either of the French if they finally appear in India, or to be employed against Haider Ali Khan. They have also instructions to demand my discharge from the service of Nizamali. The latter replied that he had no troops to furnish them, that, as for their demand concerning me, he had taken me in his service, that I was performing my duty, that in his opinion, it was not fair to discharge me in order to oblige them, that moreover, he thought that they had come to pay him the tribute for the provinces of Rajmahendry and Sricacole the possession of which they had been enjoying for more than 15 years without paying him anything, and that they should return and advise the Governor of Madras on his behalf to pay him this amount; otherwise he would have to seek means to obtain the payment.

The discontent (against the English) has spread through the whole peninsula. M. de Montigny, who has kindly undertaken to carry this letter, will give you an exact account of the political situation in the country. At the Court of Delhi, he observed the feeling animating all the princes who long that France should make some effort in this part of the world. I need not speak to you, Sir, about my situation after the loss of Pondicherry. M. de Montigny, who has done me the honour to spend a few days in my camp, can apprise you of it. I shall therefore only confine myself to renew to you my feelings of gratitude as well as those of my whole staff. M. de Bellecombe forwarded to me on October 14, 1778, the commissions which you kindly solicited for them from the Minister. While dispatching them, he informed me that he had been obliged to use some of the commissions to reward some individuals who distinguished themselves during the siege. He filled up the gap by sending me provisional commissions, except that of the Captain which you had announced to me for M. Clèment Prèvost, my second in command. The result is that this officer actually possesses only a Lieutenant's commission. I hope, Sir, you will continue your good offices to this officer and obtain for him what his good conduct deserves. I must do him this justice, inasmuch as

he is full of zeal for the interests of the nation and ardently desires to get an occasion to give fullest proof of it.

For a very long time, I have not had the honour to receive letters from you. I have, however, regularly addressed you letters through M. de Bellecombe as well as through foreign agency. I have attributed this delay to war, especially as I have received a letter from M. de St. Martin by which he informs me of the zeal with which you support my interests. Your past kindnesses lead me to entertain sound hopes for the future. A generous court is eager to protect every officer who loves his mother-country. I shall always preserve such a sentiment and that is, Sir, how I shall try to prove to you my gratitude and my respect.

Sir

Your very humble and very obedient servant

De Lalee

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f 21-22v°. Alexandria, March 4, 1777

My dear General,

I have just arrived at Alexandria after sailing for one whole month. The ship, on which I was a passenger, was obliged to lay anchor for 4 days at the Castle of Smyrna and for 14 days at Folliry. 20 kilometres further, because the southern wind continued to blow in all its fury in these latitudes. You can just imagine my impatience! The frigate la Gracieuse, commanded by M. le Chevalier d' Achon, also came and laid anchor there. At last a light northern wind began to blow and we started but were obliged to beat to windward during the whole night to double the Cape Bonne and once again laid anchor at Espanuadans whence we left on the next day at 4 o'clock and came as far as Samor with a little chill wind, but soon the wind increased and we reached here on the 4th at 9 a.m. As a ship is leaving tomorrow for Marseilles, I am sending you this despatch hurriedly to apprise you not only of my arrival but also of the particulars, which I learnt from M. Rogon, Consul of the French nation at Alexandria, from letters which he showed me. I have put on it the address which you ought to expect from me. M. Roux confirms the death

of M. de Grand Maison [36] along with that of a part of his craftsmen. He even says that he threw him into the sea during the passage from Mocha to India where they were about to arrive. As M. Roux is at Cairo, I shall learn something more important.

On February 4, an English ship arrived at Suez, loaded with goods from India and which had five passengers on board, among whom M. Rogon learnt that there was a Colonel. The alacrity which he displayed in proceeding to Europe gives reason to suspect that he may be entrusted with a special mission. He has even chartered a ship to hasten his departure. I shall communicate to you my reflexions on all these points when I reach Cairo where I shall receive some more information.

I leave day after tomorrow for Ronctis for want of an earlier opportunity. I need not speak to you about my impatience; it is such that I am really grieved. I have taken an official log-book of the ship on which I travelled, to enable myself to spend the time, if ever I needed it. This sea is bad during the winter because of the southern winds which almost always prevail here. I cannot write to you anything more today. Rest assured that there will never be a single moment lost because of my mistake. But I cannot control the winds. You can imagine how I must have suffered in taking one whole month to cross 720 kilometres. I shudder whenever I think of it. I am keeping good health. I hope to make up for all this loss by my activity. Please assure the Minister that whatever I learn concerning etc. etc., that nothing can stop me. Every obstacle disappears before my eyes. I see only my objective.

I have the honour to be most devotedly

My dear General

Your very humble and very obedient servant

MONTIGNY

I shall write to you immediately on my arrival at Cairo and I also hope that my departure for etc. etc.

I am sending this letter to you by an English ship which is leaving tomorrow at 4 a.m. for Marseilles. I have taken the precaution to put

it in the wrapper of a merchant at Marseilles from where M. Rogon has given instructions to forward it immediately to its destination. No ship is leaving from this port for another 18 to 20 days. That is why I decided to take advantage of this opportunity.

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f. 23-24

Cairo, April 3, 1777

My Lord,

My first care on arriving at Cairo was to inquire about the departure of the earliest ship from Suez for Mocha, but as I was assured that it was absolutely impossible to set sail before May 15, I thought that I could not better employ my time than by seeking information about navigation in the Red Sea and about the present situation in this country.

Here is the most authentic information I could obtain on this subject.

It is impossible to proceed from the ports of the Red Sea to the Malabar Coast before the end of August because of the tempests which almost continuously prevail in these regions, from the month of April to this epoch and sometimes to the end of September. Moreover, you can move out of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb only from the month of June to September, when the northern wind begins to blow constantly in the Red Sea. It is according to this date that you must regulate your course.

The most suitable season to proceed from France to India by the Red Sea is Spring. At this time, ships from Marseilles reach Alexandria in 15 to 20 days, often in much less time. Therefore, calculating the time required to travel from Alexandria to Suez, which can be estimated at 9 to 10 days, it is quite evident that, if you start from the Mediterranean ports in the beginning of April, you would arrive in time at Suez to take advantage of the northern wind which begin to blow not earlier than June. Any other season would present obstacles difficult to surmount and even dangerous for navigation.

This exact information is available only since a short time back when the English began to frequent this sea.

I think, my Lord, it would be worth while fixing your attention for a moment on the commercial operations and the connections which the

English have just established from India with Egypt and Europe through the Red Sea. The arrival of six ships of their Company at Suez in the beginning of March, preceded by a frigate of 24 guns which started from Madras to open and assure the course of these ships, sufficiently confirms what I am advocating.

Some supercargoes of these ships hinted to different persons in the town that they were partly destined for the Persian Gulf, but the troubles in Persia had induced them to change their course. You must be very ignorant about the actual state of affairs to be taken in by this story. It is now for two consecutive years that they have appeared at Suez and that they have established there a merchant who performs the functions of a Consul, till the time he receives letters confirming his appointment.

Besides, I know very positively that there was an engineer on one of their ships, destined to pass through this sea, to survey its coasts and reconnoitre the rocks and the currents which actually make the navigation difficult therein, but which local and multiplied observations will diminish day by day.

I hear just now that an English ship coming from Surat to Suez with very little mercandise sank before Jidda.

I must bring to your notice, my Lord, the fact that two of these Captains had brought letters from the Nawab of Arcot for Ibrahim Bey, commandant at Cairo. I have no doubts, from what I learnt yesterday, that they had also brought presents in support of these letters, less for facilitating the sale of their goods than to cover their presence in Egypt.

I have nothing but praise for M. de Mine. He concurs with my views most willingly. He is now engaged in seeking means for my passage to Mocha.

I have cashed the Bill of Exchange for 3,000 francs which you kindly sent me before my departure from Paris.

It is impossible, my Lord, to travel in this country, which is most beautiful in nature*; I also dare say one of which the conquest would be most easy without making the most ardent vows to see it pass under a more judicious and enlightened government. I have still to run errands and obtain perfect knowledge of the Red Sea before I submit to you my observations and comments on this conquest.

* I am using the cipher of M. Baudouin.

Pray believe, my Lord, that I am not wasting a single moment here. I am in search of the first boat which will sail from Suez.

I have the honour to be most devotedly and most respectfully

My Lord

Your very humble and very obedient servant

MONTIGNY

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f. 25-26 Cairo, April 3, 1777

My dear General,

I found here on my arrival your letter dated 26th September. I read it over several times and beg you to believe that everything will be executed to the letter. I shall examine the Tatta affair when I arrive there, if there is any possibility, and I shall keep my eyes open on all other objects. I am very sorry I am not yet at Surat, but I am absolutely held up here because of the bad season. I must wait till the 15th or 20th May before I set sail. The northern wind begins to blow in the Red Sea only towards the beginning of June and sailing out of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb can commence only in the month of June. You cannot reach the Malabar Coast before the end of August because of the tempests which almost always prevail in these seas. As it was absolutely impossible to leave this place, I engaged myself in seeking information on all the points concerning my mission, on the navigation in the Red Sea as well as on the actual situation in this country which deserves greatest attention on the part of the Ministry. I cannot do better than by sending you a copy of the letter I am writing to M. de-Sartine which contains many interesting details. I have put two sentences in code words in this letter with your symbols so that you should study them fully. I leave to your prudence the care to say what you think proper about the copy which I am sending you. Perhaps you may not speak about it. I have addressed it to M. de-Sartine alone as it had been prescribed to me when I would speak of my voyage through the Red Sea.

M. Grand Maison's death is confirmed and unfortunately a very sure source mentions that his papers have fallen into the hands of our friends the English.

You will find from the letter in question that my position is very delicate in the midst of curious persons who are interested in knowing what I intend to become and do. But I am going to regulate my conduct with such caution and firmness that the Minister will be pleased with it. I am making arrangements to leave before the English, who are here, to steal a march on them in India. The goods which the six English ships have brought into Suez are estimated at more than 35,00,000 francs, all at the first dispatch.

I have the honour to be most devotedly and most affectionately

My General

Your very humble and very obedient servant

MONTIGNY

Pray offer my respectful homage to Madame de Mainav

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f. 27-28 v°

Mocha, September 28, 1777

My dear General,

I have the honour to inform you that after employing all possible means to hasten my voyage, I could reach Mocha only on September 25. Le Zaima on which I embarked at Suez was captured at Yenbo where all its shipment in wheat, which was destined for Jidda, was seized. The ship took 41 days for a voyage which is ordinarily completed in 18 to 20 days. The calm weather towards the end of July and the beginning of August was partly responsible for this delay. The dilateriness of this navigation cannot be described. I took advantage of a boat which was leaving from Yenbo to Jidda which I reached in 4½ days. It is a crossing of about 280 kilometres. And yet I was served by a most favourable wind. Not finding in this port any ship leaving for Mocha, I chartered a boat;

that was the only dicision I could take. This boat cost me 112 pattaques, that is to say 672 francs. I was detained for 13 days in this cursed town before I could leave, although I was constantly thinking that I would set sail. Europeans have to put up with all sorts of vexations on this coast, especially since the English have started going to Suez without paying the customs to the Sheriff of Mecca. If I had not been furnished with a letter from the Customs Officer at Cairo who declared that I was a Frenchman, I think I could never have left the place. The English are detested there. Finally, with the help of money, I could extricate myself from their hands. The boat rowed in calm weather and I forced the pilot to sail during the night, against their custom, in order to travel faster. I got into a launch at Hodeida where I got rid of my big boat from Jidda. I nearly perished 20 times in this launch. In spite of all my efforts, I could not reach Mocha in time. The last boats had left three weeks before. The last English boat, on which necessity would have compelled me to embark, had left Mocha 13 days before my arrival. There was not a single boat in this port fit to leave for India. The adverse winds had already begun to blow. I cannot describe to you my position. You can imagine it. My discomposure is beyond expression. The departure of M. de B. completely embitters all my reflexions.

This is, however, the desperate decision which I am going to take to give you a proof of my zeal for my undertaking and of my personal attachment for you. I have chartered a small local boat to try to get out of this Strait. I shall fight against the winds for 15 to 20 days and if I am lucky enough to succeed, I shall follow the eastern coast of Arabia up to Muscat from where I shall surely find opportunities to reach Surat. This is my agreement with the Captain. If I succeed in my attempt, I give him 1,800 francs. If, on the contrary, after making the best efforts, I am obliged to return to Mocha, I give him only half the amount. In any case, I shall have at least completely fulfilled the object of His Royal Majesty.

This bold attempt will give you an idea of my character. Every one here is opposed to my plan. They say that I am taking too great a risk in this season, that between the Strait of Babel Mandeb and the Port of Mukalla there are currents which hit the African Coast and that with the kind of vessel on which I am embarking, I would find it difficult to get out of the bays which exist on this coast, that, moreover, there are very

violent gales blowing from the south in these latitudes during the change of the season. In short, I do not want to have any reproach on my head. I shall attempt anything to get out of here. The obstacles will embolden me to face misfortune.

I have been obliged to borrow 2,700 francs from the Banias of the French nation not to find myself without any resource at Muscat. I have given them a promissory note which I shall discharge on my arrival at Surat from my salary. I hope the Minister will knidly allow this excess expenditure. Moreover, it does not matter if I were to put myself on bread and water for two years. I want to succeed or at least try everything that is humanly possible to succeed.

I arrived day before yesterday at noon and I shall start again tomorrow morning, perhaps at night. I have just time enough to take in sea-bread and water for my voyage. I am spending a part of the night in writing this letter to you.

I have done lot of work. You will be content with it. If I were not in such a hurry to try to get out of this Strait, I would have made a fair copy of my work and prepared a memorandum on this subject, but I attend to the most pressing thing first.

If I have the misfortune not to succeed in my attempt, I shall finish this work at Mocha and I shall dispatch it to Alexandria by a trustworthy man whom I am leaving here and who will start from this place only 20 to 25 days after my embarkation. I have taken all the precautions which such a project necessitates. I have promised you that to the last breath of my life, I shall fulfil the mission I have undertaken and I shall do it.

I have the honour to be most devotedly

My General

Your very humble and very obedient servant

MONTIGNY

You will kindly give an account of all these events to the Minister. I have just the time to finish my letter. I want to profit by the northerly wind which has started blowing. If it lasts for 4 or 5 days, I shall succeed in my endeavour.

f. 29-30 v°

Mocha, December 12, 1777

My dear General,

My attempt failed. I returned to the Port of Mocha, full of despair in my heart. I struggled in vain for 15 days continuously against the winds and the currents. I was obliged to give in before their violence and abandon my plan. Here are the details.

I left the port of Mocha on 28th September at 10 o'clock in the evening, and on the next day at 8 o'clock in the morning I had already crossed the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. I was at the height of my joy, thinking that there were no more obstacles in the way, but I was soon disillusioned. On the same day at 9 o'clock in the evening, there arose such a violent gale from the south that we nearly sank. We were obliged to lower the sails and give in before the violence of the wind which threw us back to the entrance of the Strait from which we had sailed away to a distance of about 72 kilometres. We lay anchor for two days on the Arabian Coast until the southern wind had subsided a little. I then forced the Captain to set sail again and make fresh efforts. It was with great difficulty that I succeeded in persuading him, because he feared some more unfortunate circumstance than the first. However, we set sail, and we kept the sea for 15 days continuously without going farther than 60 to 70 kilometres beyond the Port of Aden, being pushed back by the southern winds and carried away by the currents. Finally, thrown back several times towards the Strait, I was forced to return to Mocha. Now you can imagine my plight. It is certainly dreadful, since, in spite of my zeal, my courage and the money which I have spent, it was impossible for me to reach my destination at a time when it would have been so interesting to be there. There are no humanly possible means to get out of this place before the early northern winds begin to blow. I have tried them all but in vain.

I am going to make a fair copy of my work. I hope that this work will justify the employmnt of my time. It will be for you, my dear General, to judge it. I shall say only one thing. It has cost me more trouble and exposed me to more dangers than can ever be imagined. I shall spend days and nights to be in a position to profit by the first ships which will sail up the Red Sea and to dispatch these papers to Cairo by a trustworthy man I have here. I am requesting M. de Mine, Consul General, to forward

this packet to its destination by the quickest and the surest channel. I shall close this letter only at the time of its departure. Perhaps I may have some other piece of information to pass on to you. I may be able to communicate to you the views I may then have.

12th December 1777

My dear General, my work is over. I am making up a packet which I have the honour to send you in an envelope addressed to my cousin. That is the safest way not to attract the attention by the address of the Minister for the Navy. I request you to forward it to the department of M. de St. Didier. I am informing him about it, but I am not entering into any details with him on this subject. If you would kindly explain to him the reasons which led me to employ this channel, I would be immensely obliged. But I would be still greater obliged if you would be present at the time the packet is opened. You can easily guess the reasons. It is because I would like to have you ....
I have some other piece of work of which I have not the time to make a fair copy. I must not let the present opportunity slip. This evening a boat is leaving on which I am sending a man who is entrusted with all these papers. I have made use of your cipher for some information which it was expedient to include. If I were not afraid of increasing the volume, I would have pasted on the canvas the general plan of the Red Sea, but I found it much too big to enlarge it on the canvas. I have prepared a general map based on the most recent astronomical observations. I have added to it topographical details which I considered necessary for the knowledge of the coast and the safety of the navigation. M. d'Anville has given a general map of the Red Sea, but it is not so exact on many essential points. I have pointed out in my memorandum some errors which I found in this map. I have indicated others, because they appeared to me sufficiently important to be revealed.

I refer again to my position. I shall confess to you, my dear General, that it is such that I would prefer to be at Port Lorient. I would perhaps be in a better position to reach my destination. I am reckoning all the mishaps that can befall me and my reasoning gets confounded. No vessels from here can leave for India before the month of June. And then they visit only the Coromandel Coast. Those leaving for the Malabar Coast and reaching their destination in six weeks or two months, can start only in the beginning of August. No Indian ship has yet arrived

here. Only English and Moorish ships appear here. French ships visit Mocha only very rarely. The small boats from Muscat which have already arrived in the ports of this sea, are fit only for coastal traffic. There is not a single boat in the Red Sea which can undertake a voyage to India. From all this account, you can just imagine the obstacles I have still to surmount on all sides. Shall I still wait for 6 months in this port for the ships leaving for the Coromandel Coast, or else shall I prefer to stay here till the month of August to reach my first destination, that is to say Surat ? In any case, could I be sure not to find any more obstacles at this epoch ? I think I have sufficiently waited. The arrival of the English justifies this anxiety. This sea is very much frequented by their boats. What is your opinion ? I have already communicated to you that my position is very embarassing; and yet I have to take a decision. This is what I have decided. It is to attempt perhaps the impossible, but I must do it or perish. I shall not wait for the season when the ships leave this sea for India. This channel no longer suits my position. I must leave. I have chartered a boat which will sail as soon as the first northern winds start to blow. Towards the 12th or 15th of January, the southern wind subsides and the northern wind blows by intervals. At this epoch the small ships begin to sail out of the Red Sea. I have made my arrangements to be the first on the sea. My pilot is an intelligent and a resolute Arab. He concurs with my plans. Once I am at Muscat, if I do not find a boat ready to leave for Surat, I shall attempt the passage with my boat and a local pilot. I have no more reflexions on this subject.

As regards my funds, you ought to guess my situation. All the obstacles and the delays that I have experienced soon emptied my purse. You are already aware of the engagements I have entered into. I am sacrificing an additional sum of 300 francs towards my mission. The man who is carrying my papers, returns from Mocha to Alexandria at my expense. This sum of 300 francs will be paid to him only when he delivers to the Consul the packet in question. If the Minister does not run to my succour, I shall be in the greatest (monetary) embarrassment. I request you, my dear General, to communicate all these details to the Minister. Until I receive a reply from the Department, I shall pay for my debts from my salary, and moreover, I shall take all suitable steps to redeem my debts. I shall put myself on bread and water, if necessary. I would very much like to have nothing else to do at the present moment. You

can rely, my dear General, on my activity and my courage, and rest assured at the same time that I shall attempt the impossible to justify your choice. You can shut your eyes to the dangers I am going to run. Fortune will perhaps cease to be adverse to me in the end.

I have the honour to be most devotedly

My dear General

Your very humble and very obedient servant

MONTIGNY

P.S. :

I beg you, my dear General, to pay my compliments to Mme de Maiyade, your relative.

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f. 31-31v°

I very eagerly seize this occasion to drop you a line. Two English ships, coming from India, have just laid anchor in this port. They will leave tomorrow at day-break for Suez. As it is a very quick means of forwarding news from my end, I am utilizing it to discuss a family matter of which you will soon be more fully informed.

A fortnight ago I sent a trustworthy person who was entrusted with an important packet and several letters for you. You will be satisfied with my work. As this man travels *via* Jidda for the sake of greater safety, because only English ships sail straight to Suez, it is possible that he might arrive at Suez only six weeks after this letter. But I thought I should follow this channel for greater safety. This letter will contain few details and you can easily guess the reason.

I shall only inform you that I could not reach Mocha before the 25th September, because of the obstacles I met during my voyage, that at this epoch the last boats for India had already left three weeks before and that the adverse winds had already begun to blow. Not finding any boat in the port which could undertake a voyage to India, I took the decision to charter a local boat to try to get out of this sea. My plan was to reach Muscat where I would have found opportunities to sail for Surat, but all my efforts were in vain. I fought for 15 days running against the adverse winds and the currents, but was continuously thrown back towards the Strait of Babel Mandeb. I had to give in before the obstacles and return

to the Port of Mocha after sailing in vain for more than 600 kilometres and exposing myself to death twenty times. I shall no more dwell on this point. You certainly sympathise with me, but my position cannot be easily appreciated. I have planned to get out of this place shortly, but it would take too long a time to give you its details. I am being pressed to finish my letter. However, I shall add a line.

One of these English boats has come from Bengal and announces the death of the Commander-in-Chief of their troops in India. The other has come from Bombay and confirms a report, which has spread here, that a ship from the Emperor of Germany has seized Gogha and has set up a factory there. You know that this town is situated in the Gulf of Cambay. It is reported that it has a good port. Some Banias first wrote that they were French. This ship started from Trieste. Thus a new maritime power has risen. I am sorry I am being pressed to finish, but the messenger must leave.

I have not time enough to write to my cousin. If you would give him news about me, I would be infinitely obliged to you.

Mocha, December 22nd 1777

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f. 33-36 v°

Surat, 22nd April 1778 [37]

My dear General,

I had the honour to inform you by a letter written from Muscat on April 12 that unable to find an opportunity to sail direct to Surat or to the Gulf of Sind, I decided to go to Porbandar from where I would be in a position to reach either of these points according to circumstances. But as the shift in the monsoon closed to me the route to Sind and to Tatta, I took the decision to proceed to Surat where I arrived on May 4, in a launch 29 ft. long by 8 ft. broad at a time when the sea, which touches the Malabar Coast, is very rough. I was seized on 27th April by the Kolis within sight of Diu. They took the boat in which I was sailing to Nora Bandar (Navi Bandar) where they detained me for 36 hours. After a very hot argument with their chief, they allowed me to go out of their nest without robbing me of anything, although they searched

very minutely my boxes and my portmanteaus. My servant had taken the precaution to hide my money in an old gaotskin which was still left with me from my journey to Suez. I went straight to Jafarabad to the camp of the chief who has greatest influence on the pirates of this coast. He gave me a very good reception. He had even the courtesy to give me his dispatch-boat with a Koli Captain for my greater safety. With his recommendation, I passed in the midst of the pirates without harassment. It is considered here as a very extraordinary thing that I should get out of their hands without being completely robbed. I came off with some rice, some tobacco and a Venetian sequin. If I had not taken the decision to come against the monsoon and by 10 different boats which I chartered, I could have arrived only on the 10th or the 15th September, at a time when ships from the Red Sea arrive here. Fortunately, I have after all stepped ashore and in sound health, although worn out with fatigue. I have replenished my linen which I needed very badly. I have everything ready for my journey to the Mughal capital and I leave tomorrow at 4 o'clock in the morning. I am taking with me a sipahee, a patamar and an interpreter who is daily improving my Persian. I expect to reach my destination in 40 days and perhaps in less time. I have taken all the precautions for my journey. My men are armed with guns with fixed bayonets which the Consul has lent me, and I expect to be more fortunate in this journey than in the first one. There is no information here as to where Madek is, but I shall find his whereabouts on the way and shall conduct myself with him with all the necessary caution. Modave is no longer at the Mughal Court; he is at present at Adoni with Lalée, commander of a large detachment.

I received very good assistance from M. Anquetil; he has the heart of a true patriot. He contributes to the welfare of the (French) nation, with all the power and resources at his disposal. His position here is all the more important as it enables him to watch very closely the manoeuvres and the intrigues of the English in this part of northern Hindustan. The English here are in a state of greatest anxiety over the fate of all their establishments. They are worried about the arrival of the French. Everyone speaks about it. They have stripped Surat and Bhadoch to reinforce the garrison of Bombay, where they have at present 10,000 men of which 850 Europeans. They are expecting a reinforcement from Bengal, because the Governor of Madras has refused them any troops

on the plea that he needed them for the defence of the town. Every day they are raising new recruits and forcibly. I learnt from the Governor of the town that they had a detachment at Delhi and another at Kalpi with twelve (?) pieces of cannon. That of Delhi, he says, is meant for the protection of the Mughal Emperor. You can see to what length they push their ambition. I shall stay at Delhi so long as the monsoon lasts, after which I shall return to Surat to go and examine the Gulf of Sind, on which I have already obtained lot of information during my crossing from Muscat to Porbandar from the local pilots. It is for the first time that I had an interesting opportunity to make use of this language and which I hope to speak tolerably well on my return from the projected journey. What I have learnt about it (Gulf of Sind) appears to me to be difficult to reconcile with the views one has sought to give you about it. I shall elicit the facts of this matter when I arrive at the Court of Delhi. In the meantime I can supply you the following details about it.

Since about 30 years, Taimur Shah, the King of Kandahar, is master of the course of the river Indus as far as its mouth and since two years that he has captured Goadel (Gwadar), he has become the incontestable master of the whole southern coast of Persia from this aforesaid town of Goadel (Gwadar) up to the town of Cutch situated at the lower end of the Gulf of Sind. The territory adjoining Sind is very fertile in wheat and rice. Tatta, situated about 80 kilometres from the mouth of the Indus, precisely at the spot where this river divides itself into two big branches, is the biggest town in the region. It is governed by a Nawab who is obliged to pay every year 14 lakhs of rupees to Taimur Shah. Goadel, Bebil, Bandar Lauri, Shah Bandar, Cutch and Tatta furnish this sum. The climate is healthy at Tatta, the fruits are excellent; there are many horned beasts and sheep; the water is very good. There are some manufacturers of fabrics which are exported to the different ports of the Red Sea, in a large quantity to Muscat as well as to Surat and Bombay, from where they receive fire-arms, lead, gun-powder, iron and copper. Very long ago the English established there a factory and are carrying on trade in this region in all the goods coming from Europe. There is no port which can accommodate big ships; they lay anchor in the sea at some distance from the coast. The best port in Sind is Shah Bandar (Karachi) but it is not indicated on the big English map. It is at a day's distance from Bandar Lawri. The English have kept there some local

sipahees. It is the port near which their ships lay anchor; there is sweet water there. In other ports water has to be brought from a very long distance; that which is available there is briny. Small boats can sail up the branches of the Indus; one can also travel by land. It is a matter of two days' distance.

The inhabitants appear to be attached to their New Prince, and are conscious of the weakness of their old master, the Mughal Emperor who, only 30 years ago possessed this beautiful region which is a dismemberment of his Empire. From the month of April, ships from India stop sailing there till the 15th of September, that is to say during the monsoon which prevails on the Malabar Coast.

I leave you now to your reflexions, and I can endeavour to almost ascertain them. I shall forget nothing, my dear General, while collecting the facts about the matter. Soon I shall know how I stand. I did my utmost to go there, but the season had too much advanced, and I thought I could do nothing better than to proceed as early as possible to the place, you know where, to fulfil all the objects (of my mission).

This is now my financial situation. The obstacles I met with on the Red Sea, which caused me to miss the monsoon, and the attempts I made to get out of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, forced me to enter into engagements with the French brokers we have at Mocha. I have given them two promissory notes, one of 250 pattaques at the end of September and the other of 285 pattaques at the time of my departure from Mocha for this place, that is to say on February 8, for which I am paying interest at 10 per cent. While entering into these engagements, I thought I could discharge my commitments on my arrival at Surat from the sum of 6,000 francs which you had promised me at the time of my departure from Paris. You had announced to me that you were accordingly going to write to M. de Bellecombe, but after 18 months of absence, I neither found letters nor money. The Consul has not even received the letter of intimation concerning my arrival. I am immensely worried. I have just addressed a letter to M. de Bellecombe requesting him to kindly send me this sum and at the same time I have informed him that I would prefer to pay this sum from the salary which the Court has fixed for me with him rather than fail in my engagements. I am dispatching to him a pattamar who, I hope, will bring funds here. The Consul is advised that these promissory notes will be presented to him at the end of September and perhaps in

February. That is the usual time when ships from the Red Sea come to Surat. He had promised to discharge them in any case, but that would put him to a lot of inconvenience. According to the instructions in the Minister's letter, he has just now advanced me Rs. 1,100 for my journey to the north. I shall be compelled to spend the monsoon here, and then the return journey will still be a matter of further expense. I swear to you on my honour that I have already spent 1,800 francs from my own pocket for the service of the King. I hope you would kindly explain to the Minister my present situation. I am making utmost efforts to fulfil my mission. I see nothing but the object which I have to accomplish, and I shall accomplish it, or else I shall die in the attempt. You know that I have always been animated by these sentiments, and they will continue to animate me to the last breath of my life.

It is already one o'clock in the morning, and I must leave at 4. You see how I employ my time in keeping you posted with news ! If I were still sure that this dispatch would reach you, but when and how! Perhaps for the next 34 days, the Consul will not find any safe occasion. All the letters are intercepted here since the movement of the English troops began and because of the fear (of a French landing) which agitates them. I have no time either to relate to you all the underhand dealings of the English or their political dreams which are spread here. We know how we stand, and I fly to my mission.

I have the honour to be most devotedly and most affectionately

My dear General

Your very humble and very obedient servant

MONTIGNY

The political situation in India will be narrated to the Minister by M. Anquetil in a report sent along with my dispatches.

Pray present my respectful compliments to Mme de Mainad. I am very sorry I have no time to write to M. de Mars. You will certainly meet him. I request you, my dear General, to kindly remember me to him. I have sent to Pondicherry a Madrepore box which is meant for his wife.

I am inserting in your letter a copy of the report which I prepared on the Red Sea. I have no time to make a copy of the plans. All the same, submit it to the Minister. I have pointed out two mistakes I made in the first report which I sent from Mocha.

f. 39

To M. Madek Ujjain, 22nd June 1778 at 7 p.m.

I have the honour to inform you, Sir, that I have to deliver to you a letter from the Minister for the Navy which interests you very much, and that I have many other things to communicate to you in which you may not be less interested. For this purpose, I am dispatching an harkara with this letter to Gohad where, I am told, you are employed. I request you to kindly proceed to Sironj which place I shall reach at the same time as you. There I shall have the honour to communicate to you the orders which I have received from the Minister and which I must partly convey to you.

I would have gladly spared you this trouble, if I were not so pressed to proceed to my destination. I am, moreover, dismounted. The only horse on which I could count has great difficulty in supporting himself on his legs. I am compelled to use a country carriage to proceed to Sironj where I hope to have the honour to meet you. In this town I shall find out a quicker transport for my journey to Delhi. I request you, Sir, to observe secrecy on the information I have just passed on to you as well as on the motive of our meeting which I have taken the liberty to disclose to you.

I have the honour to be very sincerely........

P.S.

I have just learnt that M. Madek left Gohad about 10 months back and proceeded to Pondicherry. This circumstance, very unfortunate as it is for him and for the matters which I wanted to communicate to him, does not prevent me from requesting the officer, who commands the detachment of M. Madek, to kindly send to Sironj a person who, according to him, enjoys the greatest confidence of M. Madek, so that I could discuss with him matters which interest him.

I am requesting the commandant to reply to my letter immediately.

I have the honour...........

f. 39 v°-42

M. de Bellecombe. Agra, 20th to 25th August 1778

My General,

I have the honour to inform you that I arrived at Agra on the 1st August, after two months of the most painful journey. Continuous rains, oppresive heat, the swelling of the rivers, forced me to travel short distances and make several halts which I would not have made in any other circumstances. My men and my animals are worn out with fatigue. As for me, I still feel myself strong enough to face hostile weather, and continue my journey further to Delhi where I hope to receive your orders on the course I should follow thereafter.

When I left Surat, I expected to meet M. Madek either here or at Delhi, but I learnt on the way that he had left about 10 months back for Pondicherry and that he had arrived there. I wanted to deliver to him a letter from the Minister advising him to confer with me on the subject of the memorandum which he had sent to the Court, and enter into arrangements with him accordingly. I had also instructions to collect facts about the Tatta affair ([a]) which I have already found to be an irrational project from reliable information which I have received from a person who belongs to the region and who has not left me in any doubts on this subject.

I had already the honour to inform you that but for the adverse winds, I would have been on the spot (at Tatta) in accordance with my instructions. But unable to reach the mouths of the Indus, I decided to pursue my journey up to this place in order not to lose any time. I had then hoped to meet M. Madek, and therefore completely fulfil the object of my mission here. As his unit was disbanded, and as the complexion of affairs had altered, this is the course of conduct I followed and I submit it for your approval.

The Consul at Surat had delivered to me two letters from M. Picot addressed to M. Visage, which I was to pass on to him on my way to Agra. On my arrival here, my first care was to go to his residence and

([a]) Taimur Shah, Prince of Kandahar, captured this town, situated on the Indus and all the territory watered by this river, about 30 years ago. He maintains there with an absolute power 150,000 Persian troops, that is to say, the best troops in Asia who defend this dismemberment of the Mughal Empire.

deliver them to him. In the course of the conversation, he told me that he was in correspondence with you and that you had charged him with negotiating political matters concerning the interests of the nation with Najaf Khan, that consequently he had drawn up the articles of a treaty in which M. Chevalier had made some modifications, that Najaf Khan had accepted his proposals which he had signed and of which he was the depository. He added that the copy of this treaty had been dispatched to you some time back to find out if these proposals were in conformity with your views and that your reply was very impatiently awaited. After this frank talk, I thought I could reveal to this man the object of my journey. I even opened, in his presence, the seal of the letter from the Minister addressed to M. Madek, lest it might contain some important matter worth knowing. I thought I was authorised by the absence of M. Madek to make such use of this letter of which I am sending you the copy and request you to forward it to him. I am keeping the original here in order not to be exposed to some indiscreet act in a course which circumstances might render suspect.

Among the letters delivered to me, this one has not been signed by the Minister. It is an omission which is of little consequence. On the information supplied to me by M. Visage about the situation of affairs, I sought an audience with Najaf Khan as the only Prince with whom we must negotiate at this Court, because he has at his disposal the force and the seals of the Empire.

I obtained this audience on the 8th of this month. I apprised the Prince that I had been dispatched by the Minister to confer first with M. Madek on the subject of the memorandum which he had sent to the Court and of which he (Najaf Khan) was aware, that accordingly I was instructed on behalf of the Minister to disclose that in France they were seeking ways and means to send troops to this country, but that having learnt that he had entered into agreements with you (Bellecombe), I had nothing more to add but pay him my homage while I was waiting for fresh orders. He replied to me that he would keep his promise, that he was ready to attack the English, if 700 to 800 troops and 150 to 200 gunners were dispatched to his succour; that he undertook to pay for their salary and their subsistence; that otherwise he would keep quiet until the first offensive movement on their (of the English) part, but that he had

1,50,000 men under his orders, and therefore did not fear them (the English), that we could indeed count on his promise.

He put me several questions on the position of the naval and military forces in France. I replied to them in such a manner that he should form a favourable opinion of them. I shall see him again shortly, and I think I can assure you that he is definitely favourably inclined towards our nation. He is guided by his interests. If this Prince does not receive any succour from us, the whole matter would return to a *status quo ante.* My General, you know better than I all the importance of a powerful diversion in this part of Northern India, and consequently, the necessity to have a (French) unit there. It is very unfortunate that M. Madek should be in such a great hurry to retire from this country. The Prince appeared to me to be still inclined to have him in his service, and give him his confidence. This fact induced me to take the decision to write a letter to the camp of the Raja of Gohad, in whose service he had been, with a request to the commandant of his party that he should send one of the officers of M. Madek, who enjoyed his fullest confidence, to meet me at Sironj, through which place I was going to pass[38]. But my harkara has not yet returned, nor have I received any reply to my letter. On my arrival here, I learnt that M. Madek had sold his party to the Raja of Gohad, and that most of the Frenchmen had left the Prince, because they had not received their salary from him and proceeded to Agra to the camp of Najaf Khan in the hope of enrolling themselves in his service. They are still in a state of expectation.

M. Canaples, to whom my arrival at Delhi had been announced, left for Europe more than two years ago. The letter for Father Vendet also cannot be delivered, since he is no longer at Agra; he had left the place last year. Nor have I obtained any better results from the letter which you sent me on a rich Sahukar, since he died about two months back. Thus, you can imagine, Sir, the financial difficulties in which I find myself.

When you made the calculations for the expenses of the journey, you did not expect that bad weather would delay me for such a long time, and you indeed thought that Rs. 300 would suffice for my journey to Delhi, but we are sadly out in our calculations.[39] For, it is true that I was obliged to borrow money at Sironj in order to continue my journey

to Agra, from where I had to send my Bill of Exchange to Delhi to convert it into cash; I did not get a single penny in this town. Although I had paid Rs. 15 extra to the Sahukar at Surat so that I should receive Rs. 500 net from the Bill on Delhi, Rs. 29 as. 12 were still deducted as discount. You can now form your judgement about the honesty of these people. The Bill, they say, was to be paid 32 days after my arrival. I had indeed to put up with this unpleasant business, unable to do otherwise. To crown everything, the visit I paid to the Commander-in-Chief of the Emperor, who is now at Agra, cost me Rs. 100. From this account you can very easily have an idea of my pecuniary situation. I have only Rs. 300 with which I must spend, as best as I can, all the time until you kindly send me funds.

This is the decision I have taken on his point. I am dispatching a trustworthy man who will deliver to you this letter, and I earnestly solicit you to send me at once a Bill of Exchange for 700 or 800 rupees on the same banker at Delhi with instructions to pay me the amount immediately, and without any roguery [39]. I need this amount so badly that without it, I would not be able to leave this province, and that in three months' time I shall not have a single penny left with me, to put it bluntly. This amount will enable me to pay for the debts I may incur as well as for the expenses of the journey from Delhi to Surat where I would have already liked to be to proceed immediately to Pondicherry by the first ship sailing from your port on the Coromandel Coast.

I have besides fulfilled the object of my mission as much as the situation permitted me to do so, and of which I shall communicate to you some details as precisely as possible. ([b]).

You will see from the copy of the letter which I have the honour to send you that the Minister has not neglected it. Anyhow that is done. Your knowledge and your zeal for everything that concerns the interests of the nation, will enable you to take prudent measures on all these points. As for me, I shall occupy myself with studying the Court of Delhi until I receive your orders on the course I should follow. Immediately after the rains, if I do not receive any communication from you, and if I do not see any prospects here favourable to our interests, I shall at once proceed to Pondicherry.

([b]) The end of this letter contains the details mentioned above which are included in the letter of M. de Bellecombe; I shall not repeat them here. See the letter from Agra dated 20th August addressed to this General. (pp. 2 & 4).

This is my financial position : I have just 250 rupees with which I must carry on for nearly 3 months, while waiting for the funds which, I am sure, you will send to M. Anquetil.

([c]) I have a horse, a bull, a camel and four men to feed till that moment. You can imagine my embarrassment if I do not receive money by that time.

I have the honour to be......

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f. 42 Agra, 20th to 21st August 1778

M. Madek.

Sir, I cannot but express to you my regrets on your early retirement to Pondicherry at a time when you were about to receive the kindness of the Minister and win the favours of the King. The Minister's orders, which I was charged to communicate to you, and especially a letter from M. de Sartine would have confirmed all that I have the honour to announce to you. But the abandonment of a party to which your reputation lent a glamour can entirely change the complexion of affairs. I think that your return alone can revive all your hopes concerning your military promotion as you can see from the positive assurances of the Minister. I can assure you that the Prince (Najaf Khan) would gladly welcome you back in his service. As for me, Sir, I cannot express to you the joy I would have had in discussing with you all the matters concerning the object of my mission. I beg you to meet M. de Bellecombe. This General will inform you of a letter which will acquaint you with all the facts which I cannot relate here. I am requesting him to kindly communicate them to you. ([d])

I have the honour to be......

([c]) This letter has been dispatched to M. de Bellecombe. It was preceded by another which I wrote to him at the time of my arrival at Surat and in which I informed him of my (financial) position as well as of the obstacles I had met during my voyage, especially during the passage of the Red Sea. The copy of this letter is lost; thus it will not be found here as also those which I wrote to M. Baudouin and to the Minister.

([d]) This letter from Agra is dated 20th to 21st August 1778. It was inserted in the packet addressed to M. de Bellecombe. I have been since informed that the harkara was put to death while crossing the Narmada, a river which today forms the dividing line between Hindustan and the Deccan.

f. 42 v°-43

M. de Nargency, 20th to 21st August 1778
Farmer-General.

My dear Cousin,

I am in such a hurry to send the harkara to the Consul of Surat that I have just time enough to renew most affectionate feelings, and tell you briefly that I arrived at Agra on July 30 after two months' most painful journey, made in the rainy season. I am worn out with fatigue. My men and my animals are at the end of their tether.

On the 8th of this month I obtained an audience of the Commander-in-Chief of the Empire who has at his disposal, whenever he likes, all the forces of the Mughal Emperor. He is at present at Agra with his army. In a few days, he will start for Delhi; I shall also shortly proceed there. Yesterday I had a very good reception from him; and I have reason to be satisfied with the general trend of affairs.

As for my financial situation, I shall not mention anything to you, except that not having found here persons to whom I was referred and who could have helped me immensely in my journey, I shall be, to all appearances, compelled to go to Pondicherry and join M. de Bellecombe immediately after the rains unless I receive, in the meantime, orders to remain here.

I am very sorry for my inability to communicate to you all the details of my voyage and of my transactions, but you can know them from M. Baudouin whom I am earnestly requesting to communicate them to you.

It is now 18 months that I have not received any news from France. How could that happen? It is so easy *via* the Cape. You, M. Baudouin, M. de Mars, had so many occasions. If you are acting in collusion to drive me crazy, you succeed wonderfully. If you observe silence any longer, you will surely drive a gentleman to desperation and to the end of the universe. How many labours, troubles and perils have I not undergone since my departure from Europe? It was not necessary to still deprive me of the only consolation for absence. I would so much like to labour under a delusion on this point that I would prefer to believe that your letters have been intercepted rather than to think that I have been forgotten. What has become of all my letters?

The Commissioner, who is too happy not to be with me, could he have also forgotten me? No. The friendly services which he has rendered me would always justify him in my heart.

Good-bye, my dear cousin. I very heartily embrace you. Lay me at the feet of all my family: remember me to my friends. I do not forget any one..............and everyone............I keep mum.

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f. 43 v°

M. Anquetil, Agra, 20th to 25th August 1778
French Consul at Surat[40].

Sir,

I would have written to you long back, if I had found safe occasion to send my letters. But I preferred to keep silent rather than blunder through carelessness. Today when I have almost reached the end of my journey, and when I have obtained information which partly forms the object of my mission, I am in a position to communicate to you some of it, I think, with all possible safety. I am therefore dispatching to you a man who is devoted to me and who will faithfully deliver to you the packet I am sending you. I shall suppress here all the expressions of gratitude which I owe to your friendly services and absolutely confine myself to speak to you about business.

I arrived at Agra on the 1st August after two months of most painful journey. Oppresive heat and continuous rains forced me to travel short distances and make several halts. My men and my animals are worn out with fatigue. As for me, my courage enables me to face all the inconveniences, and thank God, I am still in a condition to defy adverse weather, and push my journey to Delhi, where I am sure to receive your letter. At Ujjain, I learnt to my grief that M. Madek had left his party and had retired 10 months back to Pondicherry. The hope to find in his place some one to whom it would have........

Translation of a letter in ciphers from M. Anquetil, Consul for the French Nation at Surat, addressed to M. de Montigny (in reply to his letter from Agra written on August 20, 1778)[40].

f. 44-45 v° Surat, October 8, 1778[41]

Necessity obliges me to write to you only in ciphers, my dear M. de Montigny. A week back I received your letter dated August 13. The difficulties, which had then overtaken me, prevented me from deciphering it earlier. The English instigated the Nawab to do me a violence which has yet no example since the Europeans established themselves at Surat. By robbing me of the jewels of my wife and of my daughter, and by drawing up an inventory of my furniture, they have reduced me to the last extremity. And the Nawab behaved with the utmost savagery by sending against my person more than 400 men. I am going to sue for compensation (Anoberbey is the author of this violence). The report I am sending you and the letter I am addressing you on this subject will acquaint you with all the facts. Let us now pass on to what concerns you. Fear of war, which, as you know, has resulted in hostilities already begun at Chandernagore and Pondicherry, made me bury your papers and mine. I took out, in the presence of Messrs. le Roi and Trublet, your portfolio and other papers, and have put them in a place of safety along with mine.

M. de Montcrif, my ex-secretary, has returned to take charge of his post under me. He travelled in July and August from Suez to Bombay on an English ship. What the deuce was he doing there? All his papers were opened and read. One letter in ciphers meant for you has caused lot of stir in Bombay. What a height of imprudence! He was perhaps paid by the shippers of le Duras to go to Bombay to drop the thunderbolt on my head. The Minister was of course completely in the dark about this transaction, much less the person who delivered to him the letter in ciphers. This is how national interest is sacrificed to personal interests! What has been the result of this unpardonable indiscretion? Here it is. Immediately instructions were sent to Surat to seize your person, if you were still there. On a report from the local people that you had left for Delhi, the Nawab at once sent for the parents of your Waquil to interrogate them on your account and oblige them to write to him to quit your service and return to Surat at once. I do not know what they will do, but I know that the Nawab sent day before yesterday a Pattamar to the place where you are. If the present letter reaches you promptly, then you are warned of this eventuality. Beware of poison for you and the Golden Key for your Waquil. His brothers request me to advise you to ask the Vazir to write to the Nawab of Surat, who is a petty

person compared to him, a stiff letter with a threat to demand satisfaction for his meddlesomeness in sending spies in his kingdom on persons who are under his protection. This stiff letter will perhaps frighten the Nawab and you all can remain in tranquillity.

Preparations are still goirg on at Bombay as if they expect any moment our squadron. M. D'Estaing left Toulon on May 13. The letter in cipher, seized at Bombay, would have certainly given you all the information you expected on this point. This sad occurrence is no laughing matter for the Minister. As for me, my dear Sir, I do not see any other way to compensate you for it a little than by sending you all that I could find in the political gazette. I am expecting, in a month's time at the most, to send to Europe your first dispatches and those which you have just sent me. I would have been very much delighted if you had spoken in my favour to the Minister, to M. de Mars, first Commissioner and specially to M. Baudouin. These shippers can deal me some underhand blow by approaching the Minister. They have lost heavily and they want to force me to pay more than 250 thousand francs, amount of the Bill of Exchange drawn on them by me for their account. This has been the cause of the storm which has just burst on my head. They think that the Minister has nothing to do with their private affairs, and that he is not even aware of the blow which they have dealt me and which falls back on the Nation, since he has recently raised to 25,000 francs the emoluments of the Consulate which stood only at 15,000 francs, and has given me the power to draw the whole amount of the Bills of Exchange on the Royal Treasury, independently of this lease of funds. I am afraid the Minister may be deluded. I request you therefore to emphasize in your next dispatches all the services I can render to the Nation. My enemies will then no longer be able to triumph over me.

Herewith is enclosed a letter from Cairo addressed to you (it was opened at Bombay), and another from M. de Bellecombe. He has sent me a Bill of Exchange on Bombay for 1,500 rupees, which is not yet paid, in place of the one for 1,200 rupees which you had drawn on me at Mocha. This letter was presented to me yesterday. As I am constantly waiting for the payment of that Bill on Bombay, these men from Mocha are 1 ot creating any difficulty in giving me the necessary time to receive the funds from Bombay. As for the Bill of Exchange for 800 rupees which you have asked from me, you will receive it, at the latest, a fortnight from

the date of the present letter. Thus, though reduced to the last extremity by the violence of the English and the shameful conduct of the shippers of Le Duras, my patriotism has gained fresh strength in the midst of this tempest. You can therefore definitely count on this sum which you will receive without fail as I have stated.

I have indeed deciphered your letter. I realize your embarrassment. But your expectations and the service you are in a position to render actually to the nation, if our squadron appears promptly.............., but in case it is late in making its appearance by a few months more, in the name of God and in the name of M. de Sartine, don't lose courage, my dear Sir. Have patience. I have much reflected on your letter and I am convinced that success will crown your labours. And then what obligations will the nation not owe you? I must stop here. I am getting fever again, but that's nothing (it is a strong megrim which is the cause of it). Good-bye. We all offer you our love, my wife and our young ladies, all my children, and of course, M. Trublet. M. le Roi has gone to Chaul to meet the squadron, if Providence brings it. M. de St. Lubin is at Daman. I know the purpose which has brought him there. The Marathas are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the French at Poona with 120 thousand troops. I have given 35 rupees to your Pattamar. Good-bye, my dear Sir, I wish you the best of health. My fever is gathering strength. Do not forget to write to us.

(Signed) ANQUETIL

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f. 45 v°-46 v°

Dig, 2nd December 1778

To

M. Anquetil[40],

I have in vain waited for the Bill of Exchange for 800 rupees which you had announced to me. The delay is more than a blow. I twice sent my man to Delhi at the old Sahukar's shop. He daily receives packets from Surat and yet no news from your side. You are driving me to despair, Sir, as I have no resource in this country and have disposed of everything. I had to support myself decently; I have nothing left. God grant that I soon receive the news of the arrival of the French. The prince is favourably

dispo sed, and I have won over all those about him. I see that the success of my labours is assured, if the French squadron appears in India.

As for your position, Sir, I can unfortunately only sympathize with you. I very deeply share all your sufferings, but how can I write to the Minister about an affair which appears to me mainly a very complicated commercial speculation, and of which I have no experience at all. The King's statutes are so precise on this point that it appears that you should not have got involved in the affairs of Le Duras either directly or indirectly. That is what is embodied in the provisions of the ordinance, with which you are furnished, for the commercial operations in India. I know the equity of the Minister, but I also know his severity in the execution of the King's orders. I think I have already spoken to you about it when I was with you. Therefore, Sir, if your conduct is correct, you don't need any recommendation, and if it is not in proper order, it is useless to write to the Minister. I know all the strictness of the administration.

I also know all the inequity of the administration of the English Company, and I see very clearly that the Nawab was instigated to put on you the affronts you have suffered, but they have an apparent motive in the hostilities that have begun. Unfortunately you owe money to the shippers who are worried about the payment. That's the true motive, and in this country they use any means to ruin a man. I cannot conceal from you the fact that you are in the wrong and you certainly know it. Without this debt, the English would never have treated you except as a King's subject, and you would not have suffered all the horrible experience which you relate to me. You are unfortunate. I sympathize with you, but I see with pain that your position will greatly harm the King's affairs. In the place which I occupy, if I had funds, I would have inflicted immense damage on the enemy (the English); for want of this resource, I see all the advantage disappear, if the squadron does not arrive. I thank you for the important piece of information you have communicated to me concerning the usual politics of our enemies. I have taken antidotes, and I have placed sentinel on my Waquil. The prince has been informed of everything. I am not afraid of anything on the part of the enemy, but they cannot say the samething about me. They are putting ulmost pressure on the Nawab to obtain possession of my person. But they will not succeed in their attempts. I have the prince's word for it, and my........

f. 47 v°-48

To M. de Lalée

From the Emperor's Camp at Dig,
2nd December 1778

I am happy to take advantage, Sir, of the harkaras, which M. Pauli proposes to send to Nagpur, to have the honour to write to you and request you at the same time to forward a packet to Pondicherry, addressed to M. de Bellecombe. (1) The Dak which you have just established between Agra and Nagpur will henceforward facilitate the correspondence which is so desirable to establish between these two points in India, most distant as well as most interesting for us. M. Pauli undertakes to forward the letters from here to Nagpur. Thus a safe communication has been opened.

I beg you, Sir, to forward henceforward all the packets dispatched from Pondicherry or elsewhere to the address of M. Pauli whom I have instructed to receive here on my behalf letters addressed to me from the Court or from Pondicherry. He will forward them to my destination. In a few days' time I shall have occasion to make you other proposals.

I have the honour to be............

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f. 48-48 v°

Copy of the letter from M. de Bellecombe of which the original is in my portfolio

13th August 1778

I received only day before yesterday, Sir, the duplicate of the letter which you had the honour to write to me on May 21. I have not received the earlier one, and it is the first piece of news that I have received about you since I left Paris. DS. had informed me last year about your departure and I was most anxious about your safety .... It is very unfortunate that the difficulties which you encountered in your voyage

(1) It can be easily seen that this letter is transposed, and that it ought to immediately precede that of M. de Montigny to his General, from the Emperor's camp at Dig, dated 2nd December 1778.

(delayed so) long (your arrival in India), ... for the times are going to become more critical towards the end of April. The English received three ships from Suez, one after another, which brought them the news that war was about to be declared between France and England; that ships were captured on both sides, and that consequently the ambassadors from the two Courts had been withdrawn. They are making the greatest preparations of war at Madras. They have already collected a body of troops at Conjeevaram which is only 80 kilometres from here. The Nawab Muhammad Ali Khan has given orders to intercept the provisions intended for Pondicherry. These orders have been in execution for the last 7 or 8 days. You can well imagine that, in view of all these preparations (on the part of the English), I am taking all the precautions for a vigorous defence, for I am expecting an attack any moment. You ought to imagine how much I regret....................
I cannot prescribe to you any line of conduct................Although I have not received any instructions from M. Sr. to pay you 5,000 francs which you have demanded from me, I am sending to M. Anquetil a Bill of Exchange to his order for 1,500 rupees of Bombay which come to 1,560 rupees of Pondicherry, drawn by M. Moracin on M. Ramsay or David Scot at Bombay. That is all I could do. The present circumstances have interrupted all trade with Madras : this fact has prevented me from availing myself of the channels indicated by you....................
If you do not follow......

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f. 46v°-47v°

M. de. Bellecombe

From the Emperor's Camp at Dig,
2nd December 1778

I received on November 8 the letter which you had the honour to write to me on August 13, and I read it with all the care it demanded. I am making ready this very moment to proceed to the Court of Poona to meet the persons indicated by you. Consequently I have made very safe arrangements with Himmet Bahadur, a powerful Raja in this part of the country, who has undertaken the responsibility for my conduct there with all possible safety. I request you to write once again to the persons to whom you have announced my arrival, so as to be in a position to fulfil your intentions with greater certainty and efficiency.

M. Anquetil has just apprised me that M. de St. Lubin is at Daman, but he does not know what he is doing there. I shall keep you informed of everything. The Consul at Surat writes that his secretary who arrived from France *via* the Red Sea thoughtlessly boarded at Suez an English ship which was sailing for Bombay. They searched his papers, opened all his packets and especially a letter in ciphers which, it is said, was addressed to me by the Minister and which created such a stir in Bombay that immediately orders were sent to Surat to seize my person. He tells me to beware of poison. Harkaras have already been sent to Delhi to follow my march. They have obliged the Nawab of Surat to take action to better succeed in their plans. I have therefore taken all my precautions.

I am waiting for my departure for a Bill of Exchange for 800 rupees which the Consul has announced to me and of which I should have already received the payment 10 days back. I am most worried on this account. As for the 5,000 francs which I asked from you, I am surprised that M. Baudouin has not written to you about it. He had personally announced to me the amount. He repeated to me several times that he would accordingly write to you. I have already informed him of this discrepancy. In any case my salary will be a guarantee for that. I am equally astonished that you have not been posted with the details of my mission. The Minister sent me here to discuss with M. Madec plans concerning the interests of the Nation and induce the princes of this part of the country to support our cause. As I did not find M. Madec here, I fulfilled the latter part of the object in a manner which would satisfy you. I am entrusted with letters which would testify to this fact. Everything is alright here. We need only forces to achieve the best results. I shall submit to you an account of all that I have done here in this respect. I ought to advise you in the interest of our Nation to suspend all kinds of negotiations with the princes of this Court until I write to you. I know their intentions and the precautions we have to take *vis-a-vis* them in order not to be their dupes. I have bound them by written agreements of friendship for you and for the Minister in a manner most advantageous to us.

I repeat to you, do not terminate anything before I see you. I am sent here by the order of the Minister to examine things at first hand, and render a faithful account of the situation. I shall do it.

I am dreadfully sorry not to be with you, especially in the present circumstances. But there is nothing in the world I shall not do to force my entry into Pondicherry, I shall pass by the camp of M. de Lalée. I request you to kindly inform him about it so that he should take measures to facilitate my journey to his camp.

I have the honour to be...........

From the Emperor's Camp
6th December 1778

I am pleased, Sir, to receive your letter written yesterday in the evening, but the news which you announce to me does not please me. You may recall what we decided day before yesterday on this subject. The event will confirm our opinion. Rest assured the Nawab will always regulate his political conduct according to the success, more or less, of the two nations. It is the principle which will guide him in all his operations, and we should not expect any other behaviour from him.

The agreements which he appears to enter into with a nation, will hang only on a thread which the smallest circumstances can snap. That is the spirit of the politics of the Asiatic princes. In these Courts Machiavellism will always play the principal role.

Do not bother about all the reports that are spread. Let us resolutely await future events. They will certainly change the complexion of affairs, and the Nawab will once again swear to us an everlasting attachment which our successes will impose upon him. At least we must expect it according to the arrangements of the Court of France. This hint is for you alone.

I have the honour to be..........

f. 49 v°-50

Copy of a letter from M. S. to M. de Mon.

From the Emperor's Camp
7th December 1778

Sir,

I am just returning home, and hasten to acquaint you with what I have heard at the Durbar of the Nawab. He has just received a letter emanating,

it is said, from the Council of Calcutta in which the English have requested the Nawab to surrender you to their custody. This is the third attempt of this nature they have made. This time they are more earnestly soliciting the prince for your surrender. The Nawab will not surrender you. He has sworn it by his Prophet before whom...... which has brought home to him all the villany of a conduct contrary to the laws of nations and of hospitality. I advise you to see him this very evening, and tell him that you are fully aware of the conduct of the English with respect to you, but that you are relying on him as much as you do on yourself, and that you are not at all bothered about them.

I have the honour to be......

50

From the Emperor's Camp

8th December 1778

To M. S.

Set your mind at ease about the conduct of the Nawab towards me with reference to the English. I left him yesterday at 2 a.m. after conferring together from midnight on all matters that concern our nation, and he still appears to me the same, that is to say the greatest enemy of the English and warmest supporter of our interests which he rightly considers to be his own. He has shown me marks of most sincere friendship, and has confided to me a project which he soon wishes to put into execution against his enemy.............and in my opinion, it is so well devised that it will have its full effect unless the Sikhs make a retrograde movement on Sirhind, which I believe is impossible in the present state of things. We march tomorrow on Alwar. The artillery is already getting ready. Really, Sir, I am dying with suspense when I see no troops arrive from Europe. Things have been so well arranged! Is it possible that my labours would remain without effect? Having arrived from such a long distance, having set this Court on a tone most favourable to our interests and perhaps to see all that vanish.......... No; we shall be more lucky. We must have patience. Good-bye, Sir.

f. 50 v°

To M. de. Montigny.

Gergor, 1st January 1779

Sir,

As soon as I heard about your arrival at Agra and the purpose of your mission to India, my intention was to write to you to offer you my services and assure you that I shall be one of the first to enlist myself under the flag if you succeed. I can assure you that I am a very dutiful Frenchman and that no one will see with greater pleasure than I a party formed for the Nation in this part of the Country. If I am in the service of an Indian prince, it is because I did not find a suitable employment in my country. I was a ship's officer in the (French) East India Company. When the King took possession of its factories, I was in Bengal. For some time, I followed the navigation of the Isles of France on private ships and on those of the King on which I also served in the capacity of an officer. Finally, seeing that this position did not lead me anywhere, I decided to come to this country. How many others aren't seeking fortune here!

Up to this moment I have not been successful. However, if I am paid all my arrears, I can in a short time, raise a battalion, and I can assure you, Sir, I shall join you as soon as my services could be of some use to you. If you can obtain from Najaf Khan a jahgir for your personal expenses, we have actually, M. de Sers and I, five companies under us, and you can rest assured that they are at your disposal.

If I did not write to you earlier, it is because I was wounded about a month ago by a lance-thrust, of which I am fortunately cured.

I cannot wish you for the New Year anything more suitable to your state and your inclinations than a good party in your service soon raised and formed.

I have the honour to be......

EVEN DE VILMONBLAIN.

f. 50 v °

Reply to M. Even de Vilmonblain.

From the Emperor's Camp,

10th January 1779

I received, Sir, day before yesterday your letter of 1st January and I am delighted to know your zeal and patriotism for the nation. I can assure you that I shall be very happy to recommend both of you to the Ministers and the Generals. I cannot say anything positive at the present moment. But shortly I shall be in a position to communicate to you news which could interest you.

In the meantime, I exhort you anyhow to complete your battalion; that will give you an additional claim on the Minister, and to me a means to be more efficaciously useful to you.

I have the honour to be......

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f. 51

M. Pauli, Camp Commandant, of the late Sombre.

I very well anticipated that you would not be allowed to leave your camp easily and the opposition you met with does you great honour and proves that they know your worth[42]. You can depend on me, my dear friend, and rest assured that I shall be too happy to see that your talents and virtues are rewarded. Good-bye, my dear Pauli. With much love.

M.......

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f. 51

M.........

To M. Pauli.

I was very happy to see, my dear Pauli, that you had made the choice of Saleur. He is the soul of honesty and I am convinced that he will zealously and circumspectly fulfil the object of which you are aware. But I must frankly admit to you that I would have been infinitely more flattered if the circumstances had not stood between the arrangements we had arrived at, because you would have been in a better position to

amplify the plan and the project in question. The knowledge, which you could have brought to bear upon the subject, might have greatly contributed to its success. As that was not possible, you could not have made a substitution more agreeable to me than by selecting a man who had already inspired greatest confidence in me, even before anything was contemplated.

P.S. : Your letters are very well written, and I have put your seal after reading them. I could not see the Nawab today. He has given me an appointment for tomorrow morning, and I hope to settle the big business once and for all. We are marching on Jaipur. Thus, we are not losing a single moment. I shall send you an harkara immediately after my interview with Najaf Khan.

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f. 51-52

To Monsieur Pauli.

I have just returned from the Darbar of the Nawab; it's all over. I am taking away with me all the letters relating to my agreements with him. He appears to me more than ever decided to spurn the proposals of our enemies. He is showering promises and presents on the Emperor, who is supported in that (English proposals) by the intrigues of Abdulla Khan, his Vazir. But the great General has taken good precautions to neutralize the effects of their politics. In fact I fail to understand the conduct of the Emperor. How unfortunate is a Prince when he is completely given to indolence and voluptuousness? The old Kashmirian holds him in a spell. But we must admire the skill of this Vazir when he tried to prove to his master that he has not entrusted the reins of his Empire to a man without courage. Affecting the deepest love for the glory of his arms, he seeks him in his seraglio and snatches him away from the arms of his women and tells him that he must place himself at the head of his troops who are most devoted to him, that as soon as he has taken this first step, the number of his forces will increase and that he will find himself in a position to impose upon Najaf Khan and upon all the heads of his army, and demand accounts for the disbursement of the revenues of his Empire from his great General who is trying to place him under his dependence and perhaps betray him. You can penetrate the trend of this old politics; he would like to ruin the only support of his master, but he

will not succeed at all in his attempt. I know the key to the riddle and I hope that before I reach the (Coromandel) Coast, you will inform me of the great changes in this context, and of all the triumph of our hero. Good-bye, my dear Pauli. I am proceeding to the Darbar of Himmat Bahaddur to take leave of him and to stir him up still more.

P. S.:

He has given me an harkara and cavalrymen to take me to Jaipur, and letters so as to procure me more on the route I am going to follow. Good-bye once again.

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f. 52v°-53v° M. de Lalée's Camp under Pentegale

10th to 12th June 1779

To M. de Bellecombe

My General,

I have the honour to inform you that I arrived at the camp of M. de Lalée about a month back, after escaping from the hands of the English brigade, which was following a route parallel to mine. I was obliged to slacken my march and allow it to pass at Barhanpur so as to avoid crossing it.

M. de Lalée showed me the letter in which you had instructed him to advice me that I could send my letters to you through M. Martin. Consequently, I am addressing you this one, which will be followed by several others, if it reaches you.

Allow me, my General, to congratulate you on the splendid defence of Pondicherry, however unfortunate is the circumstance in which you were placed. It is still a very consoling fact for you to be assured that all the Indian powers are convinced that you did your level best with a small garrison against a large army, and that finally, you surrendered only when it was no longer possible to hold on. I have nothing more to add on this subject except the regret for my inability to share the glory of this defence under your orders. But I was 2,400 kilometres away from you, engaged in fulfilling the object of a mission with which you must now be acquainted, either through my last dispatch or through the Minister directly.

I venture to assure you that I did all that was humanly possible to be done. I am entrusted with letters from Najaf Khan and Himmat Bahaddur for you and for the Minister for the Navy, by which they assure you of their everlasting attachment for the interests of the Nation. And in order to give a solid proof of this fact, he (Najaf Khan) has entrusted to my charge a person whom I have undertaken to send to France and who is charged with personally delivering a letter to M. de Sartine.

I am also bearer of letters from the son of the late Sombre, from his wife and from the camp commandant, by which they offer their services to the King. This camp is composed of 3,000 infantry, 500 cavalry and 20 guns operated by Europeans.

The arrangements I have entered into with these princes are such as can be realised perhaps in the very near future. I am proceeding to the Court of Poona where I shall do my utmost, either to get M. de Lalée enrolled in their services or procure means to fulfil the objects which I announced at the Court of Delhi.

If I do not succeed in any of the objects and if there is no landing on the Coromandel or the Malabar Coast, it is to be presumed that the princes will not dare to carry out the engagements, convinced that the English will oppose them. In these unfortunate circumstances, I beg to inform you that I shall proceed to Goa from where I shall return to France. I fix the date of my departure to the month of October, but that will be only after moving heaven and earth.

M. de Lalée has the best will to co-operate with any endeavour that can contribute to the welfare of the nation. But my General, you know that all the movements that can be made in this country and the best thought out plans can secure real success only when the French appear in these regions. All the political and military speculations necessarily depend on the arrival of a squadron. Without this condition, the best conceived plans will turn out to be mere dreams of the madmen who destroy one another. The reply of all the Darbars is the same. " Appear ", say the princes of the country, " and we are ready to pounce upon the English ". They will never make any movement without that. I must inform you that le S. ....

I shall be extremely sorry, my General, if circumstances deprive me of the chance of meeting you before your departure for Europe. I had so

many things to communicate to you. In any case, I shall have the honour to address you my letters, if this one reaches you.

I can assure you that the Minister has been sadly misled on many points.

I have the honour to be ....

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f. 53v°-55v°

To Monsieur Baudouin 10th to 12th June 1779

My dear General,

I have just arrived at the camp of M. de Lalée who is now in the service of Nizamali. I am only waiting for the change of the monsoon to proceed to the Malabar Coast, from where I shall set sail for France, if there is still no landing of troops between now and October either on the Coromandel or the Malabar Coast.

I avail myself of an harkara, dispatched by M. de Lalée to Pondicherry to address a letter to M. de Bellecombe, and I am enclosing this letter in his, so that he may dispatch it or deliver it to you personally, if he returns to Europe, as it is reported. I shall be very brief and wait to communicate to you the details of my mission personally.

When I arrived at Agra, M. Madek had left his party about a year back. Of this party, there were left only about 20 Europeans, scattered and starving, in the service of the Raja of Gohad and elsewhere. I wrote several letters to M. Madek in the name of M. de Sartine in order to persuade him to return to his post, but it appears that they were intercepted. In these circumstances, I accomplished whatever I could at the Courts of the princes who were most capable of helping us, and I found them disposed to promote our interests especially as their own interest is involved therein.

I am entrusted with letters from Najaf Khan, the Generalissimo of the Emperor who has all the forces of the Empire at his disposal. These letters will clearly show you that we can depend on him. He has addressed a letter to the Minister for the Navy and has entrusted to me a man who is to be dispatched to France. This man is the leader

of the Europeans in the camp of the late Sombre, of whom, I think, a mention has hardly been made to you, although this camp is very distinguished in this part of the country. The forces of this camp consist in 3,000 infantry, 500 cavalry and 20 guns served by Europeans. I have won over to my cause the son of the late Sombre, his wife and the commandant of the camp. They offer their zeal and their services for the interests of the Nation.

We can count on the Raja Himmat Bahaddur[43] who has also entrusted to me letters for the Minister, as well as for M. de Bellecombe. They await my return to this country with troops. On this subject I have to communicate to you a project which can be easily executed the moment there is a landing in India. Without that, all political and military speculations will not succeed. The reply from the Darbars is everywhere the same, as I have said to M. de Bellecombe. " Appear ", say the princes, " and we shall swoop down upon the English." They will not make any move without that.

I would strongly recommend to you the following suggestions:

1. Don't enter into any agreement with the Court of Delhi before I have the honour to meet you. I have done solid work on this subject and which will completely fulfil your objectives.

2. Don't put trust in any projects which may be submitted to you concerning this Court, before you are enlightened on the points which are really in the interests of the Nation in the North of Hindustan. I venture to say that you have been already misled; I am prepared to submit to you proofs in support of it.

3. Don't rely on the Tatta project, which is the most absurd that has ever been submitted to the administration. Tatta on the Indus is a dismemberment of the Mughal Empire, which belongs for the last 30 years to Taimur Shah, King of Kandahar, who has 150,000 crack troops under his orders.

4. The 6,000,000 (rupees)[44] which M. Chevalier had announced are also a chimera. Kasamali Khan was the prince, who was supposed to furnish them. He died in such misery that his children still obtain their means of subsistence from the Raja of Gohad.

5. Le S. V. l'H. d. M. Ch. was dispatched avowedly to promote the interests of the Nation at the Darbars of the princes of the country.........

How many things have I to communicate to you? Please suspend, my dear General, all kinds of agreements with the Court of Delhi until my arrival in France. Listen to the truth from the lips of a man who has no other interest than the fulfilment of the mission entrusted to him, and who has expressly undertaken a journey of 7,200 kilometres to explain it to you. I shall be quite satisfied with my mission in spite of all the difficulties and the trouble it has caused me, if I can speak freely on this subject. I give you my word of honour to leave immediately by a dispatch-vessel to carry out fresh engagements that will have then been entered into in this part of the country which needs to be known by a disinterested person.

Thanks to my journeys and my observations, I have prepared a general plan on India which I would be anxious to submit to you. I am not suggesting anything extravagant to you when I say that I am not at all afraid of discussing it in the presence of persons best informed on this country.

I have at least seen the countries of which I speak, and it is not on the accounts, mostly unreliable and false, that I have relied. M. de Bussy, whom you know, can give his opinion on it (on my plan). He is the only General who knew exactly the politics of the princes of the country, because he negotiated directly with them, and because furthermore, he knew the interior of the country.

The precarious position, in which M. de Lalée is, demands prudence and the course he will follow on the arrival of a squadron need not be proclaimed. It will always depend on the political situation in this country, but will be in keeping with the interests of the Nation.

I have not received any letter from you since my departure from Europe. You can very well imagine my anxiety.

I wrote a letter to M. de Bellecombe to draw the 5,000 francs which you had promised me on my arrival at Surat. He informed me that he had not received any order on this point, but that he had sent to M. Anquetil 1,500 rupees to be passed on to me at Agra, but as the latter was under arrest for debts to (the Government of) Bombay, precisely the place where the Bill of Exchange was payable, they must have probably

laid their hands on it, because he did not pay it to me. Consequently, I was in a very grest embarrassment at Agra and I was obliged to pawn my effects to subsist myself. I had to borrow money for my journey.

M. de Lalée has promised me funds for my journey to Europe. I have never been so persecuted by fortune; perhaps I shall see the end of this unfortunate situation.

Your guess about M. de St. Lubin has come true. M. de Bellecombe will soon be in a position to open the eyes of the Minister on the ridiculous conduct of this so-called Minister Plenipotentiary from the Court of Versailles to the Court of Poona.

I request you, my dear General, to embrace my dear cousins on my behalf, and to apologize to them for me, since I cannot write to them just now. I have just the time to close my letter. The harkara is waiting for my letter to leave.

I have the honour to be......

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f. 66 v.°-67

From M. de Montigny to M. Warnet,

Sir,

About six weeks back I arrived at the camp of M. de Lalée and learnt about your embarrassing position at Poona. I sympathized with you as much as possible, although I have not the honour to know you personally, and I very sincerely wish that the present circumstances help you out of your difficulties and put you out of harm's way from your persecutors.

M. de Lalée told me that you have at your disposal some thousands of calibre fire-arms suitable for infantry. As I have been sent by the Minister to look after the interests of the Nation, and as it will be in keeping with the arrangements I have entered into to procure fire-arms, I am submitting to you, Sir, the following proposals, and if you find them suitable to your interests, you will oblige me very much. It will be an additional means for you to win the favour of the administration, without depending on events :

1. If you can suspend the sale of 2,000 guns between now and the end of November, I undertake to arrange for their payment to you by the princes with whom I have negotiated.

2. In case you have disposed of a major portion of your fire-arms, can I count at least on 1,000 to 1,200 guns at the rate of..........

3. No fire-arms will be removed without payment, and in case the conditions mentioned below are not fulfilled, you can then dispose of your arms without being bound by any ulterior considerations, and I shall undertake to recommend your goodwill and your zeal to co-operate with the Minister's plans as much as it was within your means.

4. In case of a landing ([8]), I shall immediately proceed to the Coast. I shall then meet the General and apprise him of my proposals and of your reply.

I am awaiting it (the landing), Sir. Think over the matter and rest assured I shall do everything in my power to prove to you that there is never any risk in dealing with a gentleman. M. de Lalée will inform you who I am.

I am................

	Artillery		Rs.
No. 1. Small guns, rifles with spring bayonets, steel bayonets and about 1000	6 Bronze canon of 4″	..	3,000
	6 Bronze canon of 2″	..	2,000
	8 iron guns of 2″	..	600
No. 2. Infantry rifles; all fittings in steel 4000	6 Iron guns of 2″	..	....
	8 Iron guns of 6″	..	400
No. 3. Rifles (Carbine type without bayonet) 2000	6 Iron guns of 4″	..	300
	4 Iron guns of 2″	..	200
No. 4. Barrelled-guns-rifles with canon-size ammunition 1500	109 at least 1/2″	..	60
No. 5. Rampart guns with bayonets 2000			

([8]) If there is no landing on the Coromandel Coast, I shall proceed to (Poona) where I must present myself by the orders of M. de Bellecombe, before I decide to leave for Europe in case nothing can be done in these countries.

f. 67 v°.-68 v°

Fragment of a letter from M. Pauli, Commandant of the camp of Sombre, to M. de Montigny

Sir,

I know well that you must be very much displeased because I am replying to your letter so late. However, if I had written to you earlier, my letter would have been absolutely worthless. I did not think it should do so, since I was so far away from you.

Sir, the Princes of this country never think of the future. They build their plans on the present. They consider the arrival of the French and their forces as a miracle, and suppose that a man cannot walk without feet.

This is an account of the past and the present. Abdulla Khan raised an army of 50,000 to 60,000 men, during his march from Delhi to Bahtialy [45] 60 kilometres to the north of Panipat and 60 kilometres to the south of Sirhind. His camp lay 16 kilometres from Bahtialy, at a place which is the residence of Amarsingh.

This place is not only very fertile, but there is a treasure and all its territory is prosperous.

He (Amarsingh) belongs to the race of the Jats (his father became a Sikh), and is allied with them. At a time when great conquests were expected from Abdul, when everyone was preparing to revere Serkaundarch [46] second son of the King, who accompanied the army of Abdul, he beat a retreat, a thing which puzzled many persons. This is the reason for it : Abdul is an excellent Prince for the Ministry, full of finesse, wisdom and experience and even integrity, a sufficiently skilful general, but much more qualified to manoeuvre an army than to fight. Several unfortunate accidents have fostered his natural timidity.

Najaf Khan had shut himself up in Agra like last year, without bothering about the campaign of Abdul Sabti Khan [47], his ally, was secretly working to encourage the leaders of the Sikhs to help Amarsingh and had already got 20 lakhs ready to oppose Abdul.

Then, maintaining a correspondence with Najaf Khan, and supported by the Sikhs, he (Amarsingh) summoned courage. Their troops formed up; Najaf Khan marched to Delhi, and Abdul, who did not dare give a battle, retreated, harassed, in his turn, by the enemy, but without any attack of consequence in his route.

On the 24th Shaval, Abdul, who arrived first at Delhi, received Khilat from the King and established his residence in his palace. On the other hand, Najaf Khan stopped on the way and made his entry only on the 5th day of the moon of the month Sikhat.

Abdul went forward to meet Najaf Khan who offered him many presents, out of which he accepted only two fine horses. Najaf Khan immediately entered the fort and slipped more than 12,000 men with him. He placed all his guards there and removed those of Adbul.

At this news, the chief officers of Abdul took to flight and the others prepared themselves to meet Najaf Khan.

Abdul retired to his garden with 500 men. Then he solicited the King to let him stay with him in order to save himself from his enemy. The King promised him his assistance and even sent one of his sons to keep him company.

Najaf Khan visited the King on the 7th Sikhat and took his lodgings in a mosque to terminate his affairs......

He swore neither to take water nor food, unless the King immediately delivered Abdul into his hands; and why ? To examine with him the revenues of a province amounting to 12 lakhs. The King surrendered Abdul and Najaf Khan carried him away as a prisoner in his camp. His son-in-law and Afrissaf [48] sat down like a chanterelle behind the Vazir, so cruelly disgraced. Afrissaf gave him Morschalles in his sides, but when Abdul asked him the reason for hitting him with slippers, he stopped the Morschalles.

However, the King, displeased and fearing that some harm might be done to this unfortunate man, got Najaf Khan to swear not to insult him any more and spare his life. Najaf Khan purchased the King's favour with 2 lakhs of rupees.

At present, this prince (Najaf Khan) demands all the jahgirs of Abdul and wants to place another prince in his place. The King refused to accede to this demand and said he would choose his own Vazir.

Najaf Khan will try to give his own post to Sabita Khan. If the King gives his consent willingly, well and good, if not, he (Najaf) is the master who will do it in spite of him (the King).

Najaf Khan received the King's seal as Vazir, and all the property of the Sarkar (Abdul ?) was confiscated by him.

I consider our hero more fortunate than the King of Prussia, for, his triumph is complete, and he, who only a short while ago, seemed to be a nonentity, emerges as the only man who is to be dreaded.

It is reported, and I am rather inclined to believe it, that the King, driven by fear and weakness, has allowed a free hand to Najaf Khan, but that he is really sorry for what has happened.

It is said that 50 lakhs were found in the house of Abdul. The truth is that the King informed Najaf Khan that he had entrusted Abdul with the care of 15 lakhs. Najaf Khan replied that he will collect everything for the King.

I awaited for closing my letter until Najaf Khan received the Khilat from the King as Vazir, omnipotent, mukhtiar of the King, and Sabita Khan, that of the generalissimo, mukhtiar of Najaf Khan [r]). . . . . .

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f. 57-57 v°

M. de Lalée's letter to M. de Montigny.

From my camp under Pundegal
16th July 1779

Sir,

At the time of your departure, I had the honour to inform you that I was dispatching a man to the Court of the Marathas to find out if there was any chance of my being enlisted in their service with my Party. The bearer of the present letter is the person whom I have charged to negotiate with them. He is entrusted with a letter for the Chief Minister and another for Phadke. I have given him instructions to consult you.

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[r] As the rest of the letter contains only personal reflexions of M. Pauli and would not thus so much interest the reader, only the instructive and interesting details of the revolution which has just taken place in the palace of the Mughal Emperor are given here.

He is a trustworthy man and you can make use of his services, if you judge it proper. I have prescribed to him the salary which I formerly demanded from the Regency for my party. Although I have raised the salary of the troops and of the different ranks very high, the reason is that according to the usual practice here, it is necessary to demand much more to arrive at a reasonable figure. The bearer will explain to you the necessity for such a course.

I had requested you kindly to take charge of two letters, one for M. Baudouin and another for M. de Mars. Please close them after perusal. I have not put the address, neither on the one nor on the other, as I do not know their residence. Kindly, Sir, make up for this deficiency and let me know by your earliest letter their addresses as well as yours, Sir, in case you sail for Europe. Since your departure I learnt that Raghoba had gone to Surat to join the English; that he was camping six koss away from this town with the brigade from Bengal. This brigade is composed of 6,000 sipahees, 20 guns, about 200 Europeans, including officers, sergeants and gunners. It has no infantry corps of Europeans. Raghoba has about 200 sipahees, 4,000 cavalry and 20 guns. That is, Sir, the sum total of the combined forces of the English and of Raghoba. The details were sent to me three days back by my interpreter's father. M. de Briancourt had not yet returned to Surat.

Two days back I received a letter from Hyderabad that Nizamali had dismissed the English agents who had asked him, as a favour, for ten days' time for the return of the harkara they had sent to the Governor of Madras. Nizamali has demanded from them the arrears of the revenues for 15 years from the provinces of Rajmahendry and Chicacole. This prince appears to be very much displeased with this arrogant nation. He has warned them that he had the means to obtain the payment, that only a company would suffice to recall them to their duty. This is, Sir, how stand the English who, according to the general report, wish to form an alliance with Bassalat Jang. They intend to send 2000 men to Adoni. I do not know what route they will follow to proceed there. They have asked permission to place a garrison at Condavir, Peniconda, Belleconda and Chantapely. The report at Adoni goes that the Prince endorses everything. However, two days back he wrote to me to the contrary. I have begun to suspect his honesty. His conduct, if it is like this, will force me to change my feelings of affection which I had for him.

All our men charge me to offer you their compliments and request you to remember them. Please write to me in your moments of leisure. It will be a great satisfaction for me that in distant countries in which you have left the mark of your merit, you should win my entire devotion by affection as well as by the high esteem I have conceived for your patriotic sentiments. I shall always preserve these feelings for you.

Sir

Your very humble and very obedient servant

(Signed) DE LALEE

The original is in my portfolio.

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f. 55 v°-56

To Monsieur de Lalée. Poona, 19th July 1779 [49]

Sir,

As soon as I arrived in Poona, I communicated your ideas to M. Warnet and here is his reply, which can be taken as that of Nana Phadnis. Between now and six weeks or two months, no agreement can be made with this Court. The Regency has sent a Waquil to Surat to find out the intentions of the English about the future of Raghoba. It is reported here that in case the English consent to surrender him, the Marathas will make peace. In that eventuality, nothing can be done. But if they don't come to terms and the Regency takes the field, I think that they will be very eager to enlist your services. The turn of subsequent events will decide the course you have to follow.

This Court is like all the other Courts in India. The English intimidate the princes to such an extent that they are afraid to have an interview with anyone who is French. Without a landing, we shall have great difficulty in extricating ourselves from the misfortunes which surround us. Only a stroke of luck can pull us out of this situation.

Before my departure, you had promised me a cameleer who was to meet me on the way, or precede me here by a few days. I have not met him yet. I ardently hope that Nizamali will increase your salary. The

present state of affairs and the lack of incentive I find among the Marathas confirm me more than ever in the view that that is the best position you can expect. Shinde is feared by the Regency. He is the most powerful chief at this Court. He is even suspected of having a secret understanding with the English. He has purchased all the guns from Le Sartine. All his moves tend to augment his power. This Maratha chief is camping only at three days' distance from here. If he remains faithful to the Court of Poona, there is yet no cause for despair. But if there is defection on his part to the Regency, I do not know what will happen. Time will unravel everything.

As for the Bill of Exchange for Rs. 1,000 which you had the kindness to obtain for me, I shall not use it. M. Warnet assured me that he will furnish me the necessary funds. I know your embarrassing position. It has served me as a guide in the conduct I had to observe on this point. In case you want the repayment of Rs. 600 which you paid me, let me know, Sir, and I shall make arrangements to send them to you before my departure.

I have taken 23 days to reach Poona from your camp, including the halts. I thought you would not mind if I have detained your sipahees so far, convinced that it was a safer means of imparting news to you if matters were in a hopeful position. I kept them for four days here, and as I see there is nothing interesting to be communicated to you, I am sending them back tomorrow morning, i.e. August 4. I was pleased with their services and I think I treated them in such a manner that they were also satisfied with me.

I have the honour to be....

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f. 59v°

Letter from M. de Lalée to M. de Montigny

From the camp under Pentenely

28th July 1779

Sir,

I want to avail myself of the patamar of M. Warnet to send you news about myself. I do hope that you had a safe journey. A few days back

I sent you a letter with Rustom whom I dispatched to Poona for the purpose of which you are aware. The flight of Raghoba and of Sakharam Bapu might perhaps induce the Regency to accept my party. I desire it ardently, especially as I shall have the honour to meet you again. Here the things are in the same position. The English agents at Hyderabad have not yet left; they have only withdrawn to a distance of 2 koss from this town in a garden. The English troops, which Bassalat Jang had asked for and which were to be stationed at Adoni, have set out, but they will be obliged to force their way through the Ghat, as Haiderali Khan refuses to allow them to pass through it; they have already fought twice without much advantage.

I have not yet received any news from the (Coromandel) Coast. M. de Bellecombe had not left on 10th June. If my harkaras return safe and if there are any letters addressed to you, rest assured that I shall send them to you immediately. All our men charge me to offer you their respects.

I am yours truly

Sir

(Signed) DE LALEE

The original is in my portfolio.

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f. 59 v°-60

Letter from M. de Lalée to M. de Montigny

Under Pentenely

9th August 1779

Sir,

Allow me to express my anxiety about your journey, as I have not yet received any news from you. My sipahees have not yet returned, which gives me cause for concern, especially because I fear that the bad weather may have affected your health. Please, Sir, relieve me of my anxieties. A few days back I received a letter from Pondicherry. M. de Bellecombe has received our letters, but he cannot reply to them, because a close watch is being kept on him. The English are in a state of very great alarm

in spite of the report they have spread that they were going to receive a reinforcement of 3,000 men on 12 ships of the Company, escorted by 6 war-ships. It is also reported that 17 French ships of the line are ready to leave for India with many transport ships and landing forces. It is not known from which spot they will commence their attack. But if the season is taken into consideration, it is not possible that the event will take place on the Coromandel Coast; the season is too far advanced. Therefore, Sir, the Malabar Coast is the only possible choice, and you will be informed of it.

The first English detachment destined for Adoni is still on the outskirts of the province (of Madras). It cannot cross the Ghat and Nizamali has refused them a passage through his territory. I have been informed that M. Ch., Governor of Bengal, was at Jedda with His Excellency M. de St. Lubin. They missed their voyage *via* Suez.

I had the honour to send you a letter by Rustom whom I dispatched to the Court of Poona. He will tell you personally that, in the present circumstances, I ardently desire to take up service at Poona, especially if they decide to repel the English.

I am very truly

Sir

Your very humble and very obedient servant

(Signed) DE LALEE

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f. 56 v°

To M. de Lalée. Poona, 12th August 1779

I have nothing, Sir, to add to the duplicate which I have the honour to send you. No news has yet been received from the (Maratha) Waquil who was dispatched to Surat, but this is what I advise you to do.

If the situation of affairs at this Court portends war between the Marathas and the English, send here at once the brother of your Waquil. I shall introduce him to the Chief in consultation with M. Warnet, and I then hope that they will accept your services. But remember well that we must have here a good interpreter; that is what we lack.

You can depend on the zeal of M. Warnet, and rest assured that I am not neglecting anything that concerns you. But I repeat that we need a good interpreter. I miss very much mine who would have been very useful to me at the present moment.

I twice met Shinde's Waquil who advised me to send a letter to his master with my scribe who will at the same time carry the letters which I have brought from the princes from the north of India, and about which I spoke to you. I have written to him in such a manner as to probe the recesses of his heart, if at all he wants to unfold it. My man left yesterday, accompanied by his Waquil. I shall communicate to you the results.

This is, in short, what I think about the whole situation. If Shinde remains faithful to the Regency and if he would fight very resolutely for the interests of the legitimate Prince, the English cannot hope to place Raghoba on the throne, but if he remains only neutral, I view with concern the future of the young Prince. If the squadron arrives, the success will be complete and our position will be brilliant especially as we shall appear in a part of the country which suits our interests best.

But just think, Sir, Nana Phadnis allows all the guns from the cargo of Le Sartine to be sold; these he could buy for himself. Shinde, whom he suspects of favouring the English, is precisely the person who is purchasing them. He allows 7,000 guns to be sold ! Your corps, which is offered to him, he does not accept at the most critical moment ! Is this then what you call the spirit of foresight? I fail to understand this politics of pusilanimity, avarice, ignorance. This is, I think, what constitutes the fabric of these creatures.[50]

I have the honour to be....

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(62)

16th August 1779

Letter from M. de Montigny to M. Warnet concerning the Affairs of M. de Lalée's party

I thought, Sir, that I would hear from you this morning about the interview which we must so urgently have with Nana Phadnis. Rustom

has brought letters for the Regency which he wishes to and must strictly deliver to the persons concerned. In case you feel that the nephew of Haripant Phadke wants to drag on concerning the subject of our demand, we should perhaps follow a shorter route and meet Nana Phadnis directly. I request you to take your decision according to the impression you have formed from your dealings with the nephew of Haripant Phadke, and let us not be amused by this young prince. Our aim should be to meet the Chief and find out if he accepts or not M. de Lalée's party. On his reply, we shall know how we stand. Good-bye, Sir. With much love.

(Signed) M. DE MONTIGNY

17th August 1779

f. 62

Letter from M. de Montigny to M. Warnet concerning the affairs of M. Lalée's party

I promised, Sir, to send you this morning a statement of the forces of which M. de Lalée's party is at present composed, but which can be considerably increased if it is taken in the service of this Court.

1,000	Topases
1,500	Sipahees
300	French infantry
100	European Cavalry
500	Native Cavalry
3,400	men

When Rustom, M. de Lalée's Waquil, has a meeting with the Chief of the Court, he will discuss the question of the salary of the different branches of the corps and of its expansion by M. de Lalée. It is for you as well as for me, Sir, to impress upon Nana Phadnis the importance of the Party. The Waquil is an intelligent man who will settle the terms with this prince. Don't waste a minute. Try to fix an interview tomorrow with the nephew of Haripant Phadke, and we shall see then what we can do. Good-bye, Sir. With much love.

(Signed) M. DE MONTIGNY

f. 61 v°

Letter from M. le Marquis de Culan to M. de Montigny

M. de Lalée's Camp
25th August 1779

Sir,

I received the letter which you wrote to me at Shrirangapattan. I would have immediately replied to you, but as I then intended to visit M. de Lalée in his camp where I am at present, I had hoped that a fortunate chance would delay your journey to the Court of the Marathas, and that I would have the honour to meet you there (in de Lalée's camp). There is no definite news from the Coast. If there was any, I would have posted you with it immediately. I think that our government has absolutely abandoned India. As for me, having lost all hope in the appearance of our squadrons, I am leaving the camp of M. de Lalée day after tomorrow, resolved to proceed to Delhi and from there to Europe *via* Persia and Turkey. I am completely dressed as a pilgrim on foot in order to travel more freely. I hope that I shall meet you on your return to Europe and that we could talk on our common misfortunes. I am impatiently awaiting this moment to have the honour of making your acquaintance.

I am very truly

Sir

Your very humble and very obedient servant

(Signed) LE MARQUIS DE CULAN

P.S. :

This letter is in reply to the one which I wrote to M. le Marquis de Culan from the camp of M. de Lalée in the hope that he might have some news to communicate to me about the arrival of the squadron. He was then at the Court of Haider Ali.

f. 60

Letter from M. de Lalée to M. de Montigny

Narayanpet, 16th September 1779

Sir,

I avail myself of the opportunity of the departure of La Jeunesse to Poona to give you news about me. Since the letter which you wrote to me on the occasion of the return of the sipahees, I have not received any from you. However, rest assured that nothing will give me so much pleasure as to hear that you are enjoying perfect health.

M. le Marquis de Culan came here quite displeased with M. de Puymorim. He travelled from Shrirangapattan on foot in Moorish dress accompanied by only one servant. As he fell ill on his arrival, he was obliged to stay here for a few days. He has continued his journey to Hindustan with the intention of proceeding to Europe *via* Persia. Because of this resolution, he must necessarily travel on foot, although he has sufficient money to enjoy comforts, as he has more than 1,000 sequins with him. All my efforts to dissuade him from this course have not convinced him. He claims that he has nothing to fear in such a long journey as he is travelling on foot without any comforts. He has not left any letter for you and told me that he had none addressed to you.

Nizamali has sent for my interpreter to enter into more favourable arrangements. It appears that the Prince wants to turn his back on our enemies. I shall communicate to you the arrangements which I shall have arrived at as soon as they are concluded.

Bassalat Jang is in a very great embarrassment. He had called the English to his assistance. 2,000 sipahees had been dispatched to him from Madras. This detachment came as far as the Ghat and was defeated by the troops of Haideralikhan who forced them to fall back on Penikonda.

I am actually marching towards Gulbarga where I have orders to undertake a small expedition. You see, Sir, that if the Marathas decide in my favour, I would be in a position to proceed to their country without much difficulty. It appears that they have not yet come to any decision, since you have not informed me about it. I am very much afraid they

might decide a little too late. Haideralikhan is doing his utmost to persuade me to enlist myself in his service. His Waquil is in my camp. You can very well understand, Sir, that it will be my last resource, but you will also agree that I must continue to humour him.

The English have not yet received any ships on the Coromandel Coast. I do not know if they have received any on the Malabar Coast. M. de Bellecombe left for Europe. He has left for me a letter in ciphers with M. Amalric. I shall write to you as soon as I receive it, and if there is any letter addressed to you, I shall send it to you. All our men remember you and charge me to offer you their respects.

If you leave for Europe, spare some time, when your occupations permit it, to give me news about you and from time to time to remember me to M. Beaudouin as well as to M. de Mars and assure them of the zeal I shall always preserve for the interests of the Nation. These are sentiments from which I shall never deviate and from the special esteem with which I have the honour to be....

Sir

Yours....

(Signed) DE LALEE

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f. 57 v°-59

Letter from M. de Montigny to M. de Lalée

Poona, 19th September 1779

Sir,

I any how postponed replying to the letter which you had the honour to write to me on the 16th July in the hope of getting some definite news which I could communicate to you, concerning your interests at the Regency. But as these men, instead of concluding the issue, always put off from day to day giving a definite reply, I thought I should seize the occasion of the harkara which M. Warnet sends you to inform you how things stand at this Court.

You could not do better, Sir, than send here Rustom, your interpreter, to negotiate with the Darbars intelligently. I had already demanded him

by my letter dated the 12th August. M. Warnet as well as myself needed a man whose language was familar to us. We introduced him to the nephew of Haripant Phadke a few days after his arriavl, and a short time back to his uncle, Haripant himself. The latter promised us, as a friend of the French, to speak to Nana Phadnis about our desire to enlist you in the service of this Court. On the next day he left to offer his devotions to his native deity; he returned 7 or 8 days back. Rustom visits him every day to get a reply; but every day he is put off. M. Warnet learnt from the brother of Haripant Phadke that nothing could be done at the present moment for the French. It appears certain that the English want to conclude peace with the Marathas. The latter also seem to be equally anxious to do so. From this fact it is easy to imagine that they will not decide to enlist your services unless the affairs assume a different complexion.

M. Warnet had proposed to the Head of the artillery 150 Europeans and 600 sipahees to operate their guns. They tossed him about for 4 months, at the end of which they told him that they did not wish to enlist anybody's services at the present moment. He had even induced me to assume the command of this unit, if his plans succeeded. But they do not wish to enter into any agreement, as you see, and I continue to stick to the opinion I had formed on my arrival here on the first examination of things. If Nizamali is ready to augment your emoluments, it would be wise on your part to stick to your post. I don't see anything can be done here.

Colonel Gandar [51] is expected here with two battalions; that is the talk of the whole town of Poona. If that is true, you can very well imagine that my stay here will be very short.

I sent an harkara to Goa to find out the date of the departure of Portuguese ships for Europe and their different destinations. I have not yet had any news about it. M. Warnet assures me that they leave only towards the end of December or even in January. You can imagine in what situation it throws me. The ex-Governor of Goa is leaving for Lisbon towards the beginning of January. I shall try to profit by this opportunity, if possible. He had planned to go *via* Suez, but there are orders from the Grand Turk which forbid access to any Christian ship in this port. It would have been a fine opportunity for me, but I must forget it now.

I now return to the subject which concerns you. I would advise you, Sir, to leave Rustom here for a month more to see what turn the events will take finally. Although I predict that nothing can be done, we must pursue till the end. Perhaps the agreements they want to arrive at may suffer some difficulties during the discussions. The time for the arrival of a squadron is approaching. Then all these combined circumstances might inspire courage among the Marathas and fear among the English. In that case, the offer of a party such as yours would no doubt be eagerly accepted. If you believe me, we must not have any cause for regrets on this point. As for me, Sir, so long as the political situation will permit me to remain here, I shall continue to look after your interests with the Regency.

I wish I could open their eyes to their interests, but to my grief, I find that the Brahmins are a people much more difficult to deal with than others [52]. The Musalmans, in my opinion, can be more easily assimilated to our ways of thinking. I think that we have missed the opportunity to have you enlisted in the service of the Court of Poona. If we had been with them in their last battle with the English, we would perhaps have been in high favour and even could have obtained permanent service with them. Their success over the English has inspired in them a sort of confidence which will not turn in our favour.

I promised to communicate to you the result of the letter which I had sent to Shinde with my scribe, who was accompanied by his Waquil. He (Shinde) was very happy to receive the letters which the Princes of Northern India had written in my favour. Here is his reply : " Tell M. de Montigny that I shall be delighted to see him. I am going to Poona in 15 to 20 days' time and there we shall have talks together on matters which interest him. If I am unable to go there I shall inform him and shall meet him here ".

He arrived today and went to the camp of Nana Phadnis. I do not know if he will come here, or send for me. I am afraid, if the Marathas conclude peace with the English, as everything points out to it, I shall not see him.

This is how things stand, Sir. We must still have patience, and see how the agreements of the English with the Marathas develop. Thereafter we can take our decision.

I was happy to learn that Nizamali has begun to express his resentment to the English agents; I would very much like to hear them all already gone to blazes. What you write to me about Bassalat Jang does not surprise me very much. He prefers to throw himself into the arms of the English rather than into those of his brother. The fate of the other brother (Salabat Jang) is always present before him [a].

The ship Mercury recently arrived from Europe *via* the Cape. It has brought various kinds of news the details of which you will hear from M. Warnet. That is why I shall not refer to them at all. All that requires confirmation. But the period between the 20th and 30th September is interesting. Thus about the 10th or the 12th of the next month we shall know how we stand on this question.

If the English are soliciting the Marathas for peace, there is reason to believe that they are afraid of the arrival of the French, and that prudently they would like to avoid bringing two powers on themselves.

I very much appreciate, Sir, the kind things you have said to me in your letter of the 16th July. Believe me I shall always have the same sentiments for you.

I have the honour to be ....

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f. 62 v°-63v°

Letter from M. de Montigny to M. de Lalée

15th October 1779

Sir,

La Jeunesse delivered to me on the 28th September your letter of the 16th of the same month, and I was delighted to learn that Nizamali had sent for your interpreter to enter into more favourable terms with you. I ardently hope that he terminates this affair to your satisfaction, for it appears very certain that Nana Phadnis will not take our party

(a) Nizamali, Prince of the Deccan, had his brother (Salabat Jang) assassinated during an interview for which he had solicited him.

into his service without the arrival of a squadron. The vague replies of the Regency demonstrate that the Maratha Court is only trying to gain time, and waiting for the date of the landing, and if it does not see any troops between now and few days, I believe its reply is easy to guess.

Since my last letter, I had founded some hopes on the eagerness which Shinde had shown concerning the forces which could be procured for them here. I took advantage of this circumstance to introduce Rustom, your interpreter, to Shinde's Waquil. I did this in consultation with M. Warnet.

On the 8th and 24th September we all met at the camp of Nana Phadnis, including Shinde, to whom .... after explaining to him the strength of the forces of which your party is composed and the manner in which it could be expanded. He appeared to be quite satisfied. Rustom delivered to him a letter on the question of the salary which you expect. He replied that he would think over it. On the next day, the 25th, he sent for us once again as he wanted to speak to us. This interview took place in the presence of all .... because his aunt had already packed up her baggage for departure and he had to join his camp which is at a distance of 3 days from here.

He gave us .... as well as to Rustom and advised us to meet his Waquil who was charged with negotiating this affair with Nana Phadnis. I must admit to you, Sir, that I had conceived good hopes from this circumstance. I thought that as he had given us such a public audience and especially as he had 2 English prisoners in his camp, he was trying to break with them. But since this date, he summoned his Waquil to Pagis Sa Bagis, and Nana did not wish to enter into any agreement on this subject. I have done my best to get a definite reply from Shinde and others, but I have not yet been able to obtain it. Shinde's Waquil promised me a reply from his master, but it appears more than proved that it is Nana Phadnis who does not want to enter into any engagement.

I think that Shinde will gladly attack the English, but he awaits the landing of the French. All of them entertain no doubts about that event, and in that case, I think Nizamali will not allow you to quit his service.

There is no more talk of the army of Colonel Goddard. He has just left for Bombay with Nana's Waquil, and not a word is known of the agreements they want to enter into. Time alone will throw light on that. I shall

be very punctual in informing you of all the particulars that concern you on this subject.

I would have very much wished that they had decided to engage your services immediately, so that you would have been in a position to facilitate the landing if it takes place. That would be the best role you could play in India. But there is no chance of realising this objective so long as they do not witness any landing.

To press them further, I communicated to them that part of your letter which relates to your march on Gulbarga and pointed out to them the facility which you would have in entering the territory under their domination. But all that has not produced any effect. Every day they promise to give a reply, but avoid doing so. The season is advancing and if, by chance, they happen to decide too late, it would be very unfortunate. In these circumstances, this is my advice to you : leave Rustom here for a few days more.........Let Nizam Ali go ahead, and if he increases your emoluments, stay where you are. If they (the Marathas) decide to engage your services, and Nizam Ali fails to do anything, I shall send you a cameleer who will reach your camp in 6 days, and then you can decide what you should do. I agree with you when you say that it would be wise to humour Haider Ali, especially in the present circumstances. It is reported that he has sent a dispatch-boat to the Isle of France to get news about our squadron and that the return of this boat is impatiently awaited. Judging from the interest he is showing, the odds are that we might form an alliance with him at the start of our operations in India. I lay emphasis on this fact to justify your line of thinking. Therefore, you have done a very wise thing to detain his Waquil with the idea of enlisting yourself in his master's service. But I must frankly admit that that will be your last resort. I have no doubts on this point.

I concur with you that the resolve of the Marquis de Culan is hazardous whatever costume he may don. I received one of his letters through the messenger of M. Barbier. He has abandoned all hope about the arrival of the squadron, and intends to proceed to Europe *via* Persia and Turkey. It's an enterprise for which I wish more than I hope success.

The rumour is current here that some French privateers have seized several English boats which were sailing to the Persian Gulf, and that they have sunk one of the frigates which was convoying this merchant-fleet.

I ardently wish you had received the letter in ciphers from M. de Bellecombe. M. Amalric will forward it to you with all safety. If there is something for me, I would request you to pass it on to me immediately. La Jeunesse left for Goa to meet M. Warnet's brother, who must have left Shrirangapatan for Goa about a month back. I am given to understand that a ship is expected to leave from this place in the course of the month of December. If that is so, and if I want to travel on it, I shall not miss it.

I have the honour to be ....

P.S.

The ships expected from Lisbon at Goa will arrive only in the beginning of the next month, because they have been to Mozambique. They are sure to bring us some definite news.

You have not replied to my letter of the 29th July and of 12th August on the subject of the Bill of Exchange for 600 rupees which you had advanced me on the King's account and which I offered to repay you at the time of my departure for Europe. I request you, Sir, to write to me on this point so as to enable me to make arrangements accordingly.

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f. 64-64 v°

Letter from M. de Montigny to M. de Lalée

18th November 1779

Sir,

Rustom, your Waquil, is bearer of two letters which will apprise you of the intentions of the Maratha Court. One is from Nana Phadnis and the other from Haripant Phadke. Their reply could have been anticipated long back. But we had to go through with it. Thereby we could have a definite idea of their way of thinking and at the same time, we could avoid the regret which we would have felt in case the squadron had appeared on this coast. I had always believed that without the arrival of the French or an offensive movement on the part of the English, the

Regency would never decide to enlist your services. But I had also believed that in the event of the arrival of the squadron, you would have played a splendid role in India by rendering useful services to the Nation through the succour you would have been in a position to obtain for it by increasing the strength of our forces. We must console ourselves with the fact that there are higher powers which dispose the affairs of this world. Perhaps circumstances will change the complexion of affairs. Our successes in Europe appear certain and we shall soon feel their effects here.

I ardently wish Nizam Ali retains you in his service. Nothing could be more fortunate in the present circumstances. I repeat to you, Sir, I am very sorry to leave for Europe without being able to persuade the Maratha Court to engage you in its services, because I think it will be difficult for you to render service to the nation as directly elsewhere as you would have been in a position to do if enlisted in their service. My regrets on this subject do not serve any purpose, but I cannot help thinking in that sort.

I am impatiently awaiting the return of the harkaras I dispatched to you. They carried packets which certainly interest you and in which there might be something for me.

I request you, Sir, to send them back to me immediately and communicate to me news which you might learn. I am only waiting for the arrival of the harkaras to leave for Goa, unless there is a counter-order for me. M. Warnet begs me to send you his compliments and inform you that in all, he gave Rs. 180 to Rustom including Rs. 30 he gave him yesterday to return, to your camp. His affairs have not made any better progress than they were at the time of my arrival in Poona, and I do not know when he can say : I am free.

I have the honour to be..........[7]

P.S.

Just now I am going to take leave of Nana Phadnis who promised to deliver to me all letters for......

(7) All the replies to these letters are in original in my portfolio.

f. 65 v°

To M. de Montigny.

Antivour

Sir,

Rustom delivered to me your letter dated 18th November. I duly replied to that which you sent me with M. Warnet's harkara. I did not detain them and dispatched them on the very day of their arrival. In the packets which I received, there was neither any letter for you nor any news that concerned you. These were letters from M. le Vicomte de Souillac who temporarily replaces the Governor of the Isle of France who has died. At the time he wrote to me, there were in this port 6 warships and 4 frigates and several transport ships. They were expecting a squadron which had left Europe. I am given to understand that I must get ready to undertake an expedition, which I presume to be on the Malabar Coast, for M. le Vicomte thinks that I am in the service of the Marathas, and has asked me to communicate to him the dispositions of this Power towards France and if they intended to join us, and if any expedition was being undertaken in this part. I informed him that the common desire of all the powers of this Peninsula is to see the squadron appear with sufficient forces to command respect, that then, the Marathas, Nizam Ali and Haider Ali Khan would gladly shake off the yoke of the English, but that no movement could be expected on the part of these Princes without this fortunate occurrence.

I, however, found Nizam Ali on the point of shaking off all fear, because when the English wanted to cross the Krishna at Varapelly, he dispatched 6,000 men of his cavalry to bar them the passage. He even sent for me at Hyderabad to confer with me on this subject. The retrograde movement of the English has replunged this Prince into his usual perplexity, and has not been as favourable to me as it would have been if the English had persisted in their resolve. He has yet done nothing to increase my emoluments, although he received me with much pomp and apparent kindness. I think that the arrival of a strong squadron alone either in one port or the other can help to alter my situation.

I continue to detain in my camp the Waquil of Haider Ali Khan who is earnestly soliciting me to join him, and is offering me the most attractive

terms, which I would perhaps be compelled to accept, if Nizam Ali does not decide to offer me better prospects.

It is not yet known what the objective of this campaign will be, and against whom it is aimed. The troops of this Prince are being assembled on the banks of the Krishna where I am also supposed to proceed shortly in pursuance of this manoeuvre. He threatens the English and Haider Ali Khan who is meanwhile at Shrirangpattan.

I sincerely wish you a happy voyage to Europe and request you once again to remember me in your spare moments. Assure M. Baudouin of my respects and do tell him that no one can better appreciate than I his generous conduct, that my gratitude to him is beyond expression and that I shall always endeavour to give him proofs of it by the inviolable attachment which I shall preserve for the Nation and my zeal to render service to the mother country.

It is, Sir, in these sentiments that you leave me and that you will always find me.

I have the honour to be most respectfully and most sincerely

Sir

Your most humble and most obedient servant

(Signed) DE LALEE

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f. 66 v°

To. M. de Montigny.

From my camp at Auticour
19th November 1779

Sir,

I received on the 8th instant your letter. I learnt with great regret that the agreements, into which the Marathas are entering, do not leave me any hope of enlisting myself into their service. That is one more circumstance which I consider as very unfortunate for the Nation, in view of the advantages which it could have secured from this power. I now see clearly that the only thing I can do for it and for myself is to woo the

(G.C.P.) PUB-II-B H 4427—28 (1,194—10-80)

friendship of Nizam Ali, and I have been bent upon it since the moment I took service with him. The anxieties, the troubles and the misery that have been haunting me for more than 8 months are a very convincing proof of it.

At last my troubles are near their end, and I am expecting any day my final agreements with this Prince. I am even expecting to leave shortly to meet him. I continue to detain with me Haider's Waquil. The last offers he has made to me are the most attractive, but as I know the man, I have decided to accept them only in the last resort.

I have not yet received M. de Bellecombe's letter. You can rest assured that as soon as it reaches me, I shall inform you about it.

For more than three weeks I have been severely suffering from a whitlow. It deprives me of the pleasure of writing to you myself. I shall do so as soon as the pain subsides a little.

I have the honour to be........

Your very humble and very obedient servant

(Signed) DE LALEE

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f. 64 v°

20th November 1779

Letter from M. Lalée to M. de Montigny

Sir,

I avail myself of the opportunity of M. Commin's departure for Poona to give you news about me. I shall not tell you the reason which induced M. Commin to quit us. He will talk to you about it. What I can assure you is that he has taken this decision reluctantly. I would have ardently desired that he had stayed here longer. My unlucky star stood in the way.

I received your letter sent by the patamar of M. Cursel. I noted with regret that we cannot rely on the Marathas. I am therefore trying to obtain a better salary from Nizam Ali. Otherwise, I would indeed have to march off and take advantage of the offers which are renewed to me by Haider Ali Khan.

I am here as if in a desolate country. I do not get any news. All that I could gather desultorily is that the English had not received any ship from Europe. That is undoubtedly the real reason of their little success in this part of the world.

If by chance you receive some news, I shall be immensely obliged to you if you communicate it to me.

With best respects

Sir,

Your very humble and very obedient servant,

(Signed) De Lalee

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f. 65

Gechottaz, 21st November 1779

To M. De Montigny.

Sir,

I received today the 20th November your letter dated the 7th instant. I am immediately replying to it. In the packets I received from the Isle of France, there was no letter addressed to you. I only learn that packets from Europe have been sent to me by a ship which must have forwarded its dispatches to M. de Puymorin. The latter has not yet delivered them to me.

Rest assured, Sir, that if I had received any dispatches for you, I would have immediately sent you an harkara to take them to you.

I think that if the Marathas decide to engage my services, it will be a little too late, for I am on the way to Hyderabad, accompanied only by my cavalry to meet Nizam Ali who has sent for me. I expect to reach the Prince's camp tomorrow. You do not give me any news from Europe. I would have very much wished to hear some.

I received from the Isle of France, three letters which I cannot read, because I left my cipher-keys at the camp. I also received from Europe some family letters which are of old date and only announce war.

I would have detained your harkaras, but as you wanted to know promptly if there were any letters for you, I am sending them back to you immediately.

When I decipher my letters and if there is any interesting news, I shall not fail to communicate it to you. I replied to your letter dated 15th October. Kindly convey my respects to M. le Chevalier Commin, and accept the same for yourself, Sir, I beg you not to forget me.

I have the honour to be most respectfully and most sincerely

Sir

Your very humble and very obedient servant

(Signed) DE LALEE

P.S.

Please tell M. Warnet that I received the packets which his brother took to Goa. I shall reply to his letter by the first harkara I shall dispatch, and I shall communicate to him news if any.

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f. 69-70

Departure from Paris : 3rd October 1776.

Arrival at Agra : 30th July 1778.

Condition of the Delhi Court

The Delhi Court is divided into two factions. Abdulla Khan, the Grand Vazir of the Mughal Emperor, flattering the caprices of his master, is at the head of the first faction and disposes an army 20,000 strong. He favours the English.

The Forces of the Emperor's army

Najaf Khan, generalissimo of the Empire, is at the head of the second faction; he succeeded to this place by his merit and supports the interests of the Empire, is the natural enemy of the English, disposes the forces of the Empire amounting to 1,22,600 men, of which 66,600 infantry and 56,000 cavalry.

Sombre's corps

In this army there is a corps of 3,500 men, of which 3,000 infantry, 500 cavalry and 25 cast-iron guns, served by Europeans. This corps belongs to Sombre, a French partisan. It is particularly employed in laying sieges and enjoys the best reputation in the army. He offers his services to France, when she will dispatch her forces (to India).

Disposition of the armies

The Mughal Emperor, his son and Abdulla Khan command their army, encamped between Panipat and Sirhind. They are engaged in keeping the Sikhs in check.

Sablis (Sabita) Khan commands a division of this army in the neighbourhood of Gosgard (Ghausgarh).

Najaf Khan, at the head of his army, is engaged in reducing the Raja of Matchery in the North and near Jaipur. He has blockaded Alwar. He occupies a position between Agra and Delhi to oppose the English if they plan any design in this region.

Dispositions of Najaf Khan in favour of the French Nation

Najaf Khan has several conferences with M. de Montigny. He is favourably disposed to the French nation. He proposes to attack the English as soon as a squadron appears on the Coast. His personal interest, bound with that of the Empire, leads him to favour the cause of the (French) Nation which alone can halt the progress of the Englishman who is encircling the (Indian Princes) and who has just seized Pondicherry. This loss does not make any change in his views which are so sincere that he unfolds them to the French Minister through a special letter. He intended to dispatch to M. de Montigny a Mughal officer to carry his letter (to France). He has changed his plan and is now sending a Frenchman, commandant of the cavalry in the camp of Sombre, as he does not wish to compromise M. de Montigny by sending him a Mughal officer. He has obtained a promise on a most sacred oath from this officer to bring him a positive reply from the Court of France.

Departure from the (Mughal) army on 26th January 1778 [53]

Such was the state of affairs when M. de Montigny left the army of the Empire to proceed to the Court of Nizam Ali, Subhedar of the Deccan.

Arrival at Hyderabad : His observations

When he reached Hyderabad towards the end of May, he observed in the Subhedar of the Deccan dispositions which are definitely against the English, but which all centre on the arrival of a squadron. The same spirit guides all the Princes. His army is 1,30,000 strong.

Camp of M. de Lalée—Departure from the camp to the Maratha Court. Arrival at Poona on July 15

M. de Montigny proceeds to the camp of M. de Lalée, a French commandant of a party of 3,000 men in the service of Nizam Ali, in which there are 500 Europeans. After waiting in vain for two months for the appearance of a squadron on the Coromandel Coast, he decides to proceed to the Maratha Court to ascertain the strength of the forces and the intentions of this power as well as to be within reach of the squadron which could only appear on the Malabar Coast. He spends 4 months in this Court waiting as vainly (for the arrival of the squadron on this Coast) as on the Coromandel Coast. He endeavours to win over the Princes and the Generals of this nation, all being favourable if the squadron appears.

Fresh revolution at the Delhi Court

Departure for Goa where M. de Montigny arrives towards the end of December 1779. He learns from a letter from Agra from the Chief of the camp of Sombre that there is a revolution and that Najaf Khan had forced the Emperor to surrender Abdulla Khan to him and has caused him to tremble with fear. He combines the office of the Vazir and that of the General of the Empire.

Departure from India for Europe. Arrival at Lisbon; at Paris

He (Montigny) embarks for Europe on the 16th January 1780 on a Portuguese ship which arrives on the 14th August at Lisbon. 8 days later this officer leaves for Paris through Spain and arrives there on 23rd September.

The project on Tatta is considered impracticable; this town, situated on the Indus, forms part of a dismemberment of the Mughal Empire, which was effected in 1739 during the expedition of Taimur Shah[54] at the Court of Delhi.

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NOTES

1. Sarfaraz Khan.
2. Chevalier means Oudh.
3. This was the war between the Peshwa Madhavrao and Janoji, the Chief of Nagpur.
4. Dundi Khan.
5. Hafiz Rahmat Khan.
6. Negroes from French Africa; they are good soldiers.
7. It ought to be April.
8. Not one crore but forty lakhs.
9. There were about 1,200 troops at the Isle of France at this time.
10. Tukoji Holkar.
11. Mahadji Shinde.
12. Ramchandra Ganesh.
13. Mir Kasim had no money and died in misery.
14. Chevalier's information, mainly collected from reports received from different quarters, is sometimes not reliable.
15. Tatta and Surat ?
16. The Emperor has no money. Chevalier recognises this fact later on.
17. Tatta ?
18. Surat ?
19. This is a serious mistake on the part of Chevalier.
20. Ajmer is nearly 720 kms away from Tatta.
21. This article only stipulates that Madhavrao will receive the amount of the Chauth from Bengal.
22. See note No. 44.
23. Then Governor-General of the Isles of France and Bourbon.
24. The treaty was signed by the two parties. Only the plan of a joint attack on the Ruhelas was postponed.
25. 28 lakhs from the revenues of Kora and Allahabad.
26. Later on Chevalier realises the fact that the Marathas were unable to attack the English or to go to the succour of the Raja of Tanjaour because of the serious domestic troubles.
27. Jats and not Ruhelas.
28. This statement is not borne out by any other evidence.
29. The Minister's comment is: How can we then rely on a prince of this character ?
30. There are obviously discrepancies in this account, because Chevalier is not a witness of the events.
31. The Minister doubts whether the Emperor can collect such a cavalry when all the masters of these fiefs have become independent and are determined to maintain their independence. But Chevalier's argument is that if the French could send 4,000 men to Delhi, the Emperor would be in a position to bring back once again all the masters of these fiefs under his domination.
32. The Minister does not think that the Marathas would be willing to offer their co-operation to make the Emperor so powerful.

33. Midnapur.
34. Is it the nickname of Asaf-ud-daulah ?
35. This statement is not correct.
36. Grandmaison had planned to go to Delhi to train the Emperor's troops in the European warfare. However, he was persuaded by the authorities to proceed to the Court of Poona for the same purpose. He must have left France sometime in 1776.
37. A mistake for May 22, 1778.
38. There is a little slip in this account. Montigny had taken this step when he was at Ujjain and not at Agra.
39. This would appear to refer to Briancourt, French Consul at Surat, and not to Bellcombe.
40. This letter has already appeared in Vol. 1, but it is included here for the convenience of the scholars.
41. November 8, 1778 ?
42. Najaf wants to send a Frenchman to France to personally deliver a letter to M. de Sartine. It appears that Montigny and Pauli had mutually agreed that the latter should undertake this mission. But Najaf does not wish to spare Pauli and therefore another Frenchman Saleur was selected for the job.
43. Anupgir Gosain, a Hindu fighting abbot who commanded a Naga force. He had risen very high in Najaf's favour.
44. See note No. 22.
45. Patiala.
46. Farkhunda Bakht.
47. Sabita Khan.
48. Afrasiab Khan.
49. This does not seem to be the correct date. From the contents of the letter, Montigny arrived at Poona on July 31st and wrote this letter on August 3.
50. Montigny will change his opinion about Nana Fadnavis later on when he returns to Poona as French Resident.
51. Colonel Goddard.
52. The real reason for the stiff attitude of Nana Fadnavis is that he had entered into a treaty with M. de St. Lubin and that he was awaiting a reply from the French Minister. Unfortunately, the letter dated November 7, 1779, is missing.
53. A mistake for 1779.
54. Nadir Shah.

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